

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

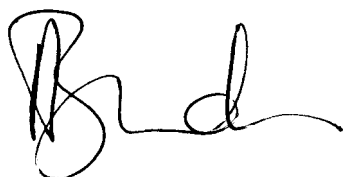
Adjourned Meeting of the Council

Dear Member

I am pleased to invite you to attend an adjourned meeting of Torbay Council which will be held in **The Burdett Room, Riviera International Conference Centre, Chestnut Avenue, Torquay, TQ2 5LZ** on **Wednesday, 29 March 2023** commencing at **5.30 pm**

The items to be discussed at this meeting are attached.

Yours sincerely,



Anne-Marie Bond
Chief Executive

(All members are summoned to attend the meeting of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 and Standing Orders A5.)

Together Torbay will thrive

Download this agenda via the free modern.gov app on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#). For information relating to this meeting or to request a copy in another format or language please contact:

June Gurry, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

Adjourned Meeting of the Council Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interests

- (a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

- (b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)

3. Members' questions

To respond to the outstanding questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 asked under Standing Order A12.

(Pages 4 - 8)

4. Housing Strategy 2023 -2030

To consider the recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of the Housing Strategy 2023-2030.

(Pages 9 - 60)

5. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

To consider the recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy.

(Pages 61 - 99)

Meeting Attendance

Please note that whilst the Council is no longer implementing Covid-19 secure arrangements attendees are encouraged to sit with space in between other people. Windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation and therefore attendees are recommended to wear suitable clothing.

If you have symptoms, including runny nose, sore throat, fever, new continuous cough and loss of taste and smell please do not come to the meeting.

Live Streaming

To encourage more people to engage in our public meetings the Council is trialling live streaming our Council meetings on our YouTube channel in addition to recording the meetings and publishing the recording on our website. To watch the meeting live please visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/torbaycouncil>.

Questions Under Standing Order A12

A member may only submit three questions for consideration at each Council Meeting. Each member will present their first question in turn, when all the first questions have been dealt with the second and third questions may be asked in turn. The time for member's questions will be limited to a total of 30 minutes.

At the meeting of the Council held on 7 March 2023, Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 were referred to the next meeting in the absence of the responding Member. The outstanding questions have therefore been included for consideration at the Adjourned Meeting of the Council on 29 March 2023 (the question number has been retained as that previously published on the agenda for Council on 7 March 2023).

First Round

Question (1) from Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	With regards to the three consultations undertaken with the traders and the public last year on the pedestrianisation of Torbay Road what channels did the council use to raise the profile of the consultations with the public so they could have their say?
Councillor Morey	<p>Public consultation ran between 7 and 27 February 2022. The following awareness activity took place during this period.</p> <p>Face-to-face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events held in Paignton Library, Geoplay Park and at Paignton Chamber of Commerce meeting. The events in Paignton Library and Geoplay Park were publicised through social media. As part of Paignton Library event, team members went out into Torbay Road to talk to shoppers and got them to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire. <p>Email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Torbay resident's newsletter on 11 and 25 February, approx. 9,000 subscribers. Update to key partners and education providers on 14 February asking them to share information through their own channels. Staff News on 10 and 24 February, approx. 1,000 staff. Members' update on 8 February <p>Media / online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated page on council's website, which had 1,034 page views. Press release issued on 7 February was run by Herald Express (front page), Devon Live (online), Torbay Weekly (print and online), PJA news (online), Planet Radio / Greatest Hits Radio (online). Devon Live also posted on their own social media account about the consultation. <p>Print</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A4 and A5 flyers distributed to Torbay Road / nearby businesses. Flyers left in Paignton Library.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplies left at Paignton Chamber of Commerce meeting for attendees to take and distribute through their own networks. Leaders' column feature in Herald Express and Torbay Weekly. Paper questionnaires left in Paignton Library <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook organic reach 10,625, Twitter organic reach 94,181, LinkedIn organic reach 1,162. Total of 304 clicks on link to consultation webpage. Link to consultation was shared 47 times. Torbay Council has approx. 10,000 followers on its Facebook page. Target social media posts ran between 14 and 25 February. Aimed at 16-54 years living in the Paignton area. Generated 325 clicks to the consultation webpage. <p>At the end of our formal consultation period, the Paignton Town Centre Community Partnership ran their own consultation event. Their consultation voted in favour of full pedestrianisation.</p> <p>Consultation with businesses</p> <p>Posted letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2022 – Preparing for a trial of full pedestrianisation of Torbay Road. Included a link to a webpage which had a comprehensive guide on how businesses should start preparing. 21 June 2022 – Come and talk to us about the Torbay Road pedestrianisation. Invitation to drop-in session on Tuesday 28 June. 14 October 2022 – Update on implementation of Torbay Road pedestrianisation scheme. <p>Face-to-face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 June 2022 – Paignton Library drop-in session for businesses. Invited via a posted letter with support from Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. 16 November 2022 – Traders meeting at the Paignton Club. Invited via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. <p>Direct / email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up note to traders after 16 November meeting via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. Invitation to complete survey. Details circulated via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association and via a Traders Facebook group. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paignton Projects newsletter launched in August 2022. Continued promotion through social media to encourage sign-ups. Currently has 2,462 subscribers. Newsletter is issued monthly. Your Say Torbay webpage which set out details of the project and allowed visitors to the page to leave comments and take part in a poll. Awareness of Paignton Projects newsletter and Your Say Torbay webpage was displayed on an A-Frame trailer that was in place at Station Square between Oct 22 and Jan 23. Press releases on milestones / key updates. All press releases are complemented by a social media post on the council's corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).
<p>Question (2) from Councillor Bye to the Cabinet Member for</p>	<p>Why was there an extensive consultation regarding the closure of Brixham Road if there is no alternative to closing the road to allow development to take place, why wasn't the decision to close the road</p>

Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	made in public by the Cabinet when it could have been incorporated into the December Cabinet meeting and who, exactly, made the decision to close Brixham Road?
Councillor Morey	<p>The engagement activity we undertook in November 2022 was expressly undertaken in order to gather evidence in respect of the envisaged impact of the proposed works. It was important to gather this evidence for two reasons, firstly so that we could provide detailed impact information to Counsel who was providing us with specialist legal advice, and secondly so that we could use it in our discussions with the developer, in order to minimise as far as possible, the extent of the impact, and resulted in changes to the works programme. In addition, the Council has received other representations including from Anthony Mangnall MP, Brixham Town Council, Brixham Chamber of Commerce and Brixham Trawler Agents Ltd as well as a petition.</p> <p>The decision was taken in accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation by the Divisional Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure on 20 December 2022 following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture.</p>
Question (4) from Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	Following my question to Council in December 2022, would the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture give me an update of the spending of the Extra £600,000 (£570,000 plus £30,000) that was added to Torbay Council Highways budget for 2022 – 2023 since his answer in December?
Councillor Morey	<p>To date, £320,000 has been spent and committed, plus £30,000 for the road safety campaign, the remainder will be taken forward in 2023/24. Examples of the activities undertaken are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety Campaign – Implemented by Communications and Engagement Team - £30,000 • Additional footway reconstruction works £100,000 • Additional Carriageway Surface Dressing works £130,000 • Advertisements for Barton 20mph Scheme £2,214 • Advertisements for parking restrictions for Fore Street Barton £800 • Measures to Improve Weed control on the highway £20,000 <p>The following items are also committed for expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of new Weather Monitoring Station on the A380 £30,000 • Signage and Markings for Fore Street Barton 20mph scheme £16,000 • Adverts for Ilsham Marine Drive Overnight Parking restriction £1,000 • Signage and Markings for Ilsham Marine Drive scheme £5,000 • Consultancy costs for Queensway and Fisher Street 20mph schemes £15,000
Question (6) from Councillor Jackie Thomas to the Cabinet Member Infrastructure, Environment and	Could the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture please inform me, how much the Council spent thus far on the Torbay Road pedestrianisation scheme. Please include officer time, consultation, road signage/markings, street furniture, barriers, etc.

Culture (Councillor Morey)	
Councillor Morey	<p>The costs to implement the first trial closure and pedestrianisation of Torbay Road was £66,708 which includes SWISCO and Officer fees, traffic management costs, TROs, advertising and the physical costs including supply chain; lining, kerb lining, signage (removing conflicting signage and new signage), wider signage for example on the Esplanade, traffic separators; bus stop alignment, planters and planting. Following the first trial, Torbay Council made revisions to the scheme to implement a partial pedestrianised option and the total to make such modifications were £9,682. Costs were primarily limited to SWISCO management time to make the necessary changes around lining and signage (all the existing materials and street furniture either stayed in-situ or were relocated/re-used in the scheme). The costs quoted do not allow for design and professional fees for designing the spatial arrangements, access and movement plans and whilst these form part of the wider design costs for developing a permanent scheme the costs directly attributed to both the trial pedestrianised schemes are £14,000 and £3,000 respectively.</p>
Question (7) from Councillor Pentney to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)	<p>It is great news that Torbay Council have been shortlisted by the Local Government Chronicle for Most Improved Council of the Year. How can Torbay become stronger, fairer and safer by building on these foundations?</p>
Councillor Steve Darling	<p>It is indeed great news that the progress we are making as a Council is being recognised on the national stage.</p> <p>In 2015 a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review highlighted the extent of our challenges, including financial viability, core leadership and governance issues, as well as 'deep rooted and long standing' challenges in Children's Services.</p> <p>We have come a long way since then, putting in place solid foundations to improve services in order to achieve long term and sustainable success. It was essential that our first priority to collectively focus upon was Children's Services, and our success in that respect is well known with the Council being recognised as Good. It was also essential that we focussed upon stabilising our financial position, which again we have achieved.</p> <p>The solid foundations across all services are starting to pay dividends, with a focus on performance and risk, creating a culture of openness and honesty about where we are and what we need to do at every level to drive change through improved service planning.</p> <p>Our focus is now building upon the solid foundations, ensuring that services across the Council are the best that they can be.</p>
Question (8) from Councillor Dudley to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	<p>Section 215 under the Town and Country Planning Act gives councils the power to take steps requiring land to be cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area. What activity has occurred in recent weeks to use such powers?</p>
Councillor Morey	<p>A number of sites within Torbay have been identified which we think have an adverse effect on the amenity of the area and since mid-January we</p>

	<p>have focussed our resource into trying to secure improvements on these sites.</p> <p>The powers within Section 215 are very useful in many cases, but they cannot be used to facilitate development which is usually what is required. The common trend seems to be prominent sites that have an extant permission which has yet to be implemented, or that a planning application is about to be submitted. Unfortunately, this does not solve the short-term problem of the appearance of a site and there is little appetite of some developers to spend money securing improvements in the intervening period.</p> <p>However, the Council has been able to secure improvements to one site recently and work is on-going there, and we are in dialogue with other developers trying to get them to do the works. In the last few weeks, we have issued Requisition for Information Notices on two sites so as to identify those having an interest in the land, with a view to issuing Notices compelling them to carry out certain works. There is a right of appeal against those Notices. One other site was inspected, and it was found there was actually little that could be done to improve the site – it just needed to be developed, with an extant planning permission already in place. Another site is a unique set of very complex situations involving the Liquidator and many leaseholders, but which hopefully is coming to some form of conclusion soon.</p> <p>There are also numerous smaller domestic untidy land issues amongst officers' normal caseloads which are progressing.</p>
--	---

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 23 February 2023

Wards affected: All wards

Report Title: Housing Strategy 2023 -2030

When does the decision need to be implemented? 23 February 2023

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Swithin Long, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing, swithin.long@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Tara Harris, Divisional Director Community and Customer Services, tara.harris@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To consider the Housing Strategy and to note the response from the public consultation

2. Reason for proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 In 2021 Torbay Council declared a housing crisis to address local housing issues and announced, via the Community and Corporate Plan, the challenge for economic and housing growth. As such, Housing has become a high corporate priority for Torbay Council.
- 2.2 The Strategy will better inform our communities, stakeholders and members about what the Council and its partners are doing about local housing priorities and issues.
- 2.3 The Strategy will give stakeholders and members a clear annual delivery plan on which performance can be monitored on a quarterly basis.
- 2.4 Although the current Housing Strategy runs to April 2025, it was adopted prior to the Council declaring a Housing and Climate emergency in 2021, and before the C-19 Pandemic in 2020. We have refreshed our aims and objectives accordingly.
- 2.5 The Strategy supports cross-organisational, collaborative working. It provides the structure against which the Council can develop other, more specific policies affecting its housing function.
- 2.6 Both the Housing Delivery Group and the Torbay Strategic Housing Board have recommended that the Strategy be reviewed in light of the Council's new priorities.
- 2.7 Responses to the consultation has helped inform the approach we will take with all our partners and stakeholders to improve housing supply, conditions and support.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 3.1 That the Torbay Housing Strategy 2023-2030, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved; and
- 3.2 subject to 3.1 above, the Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024, that any minor amendments to the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024 be made by the Director of Pride in Place in consultation with Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2023-2030

Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Consultation Report

Appendix 3 - Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023 – 2024

Appendix 4 – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Background Documents

Corporate Housing Indicators (approved by Cabinet 26th July 2022)

Housing Strategy Evidence Base Document

4 Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy is the over-arching strategic document that pulls together all aspects of the Council's strategic housing function. It sits within the Council's policy framework and provides the context for other plans policies and strategies, such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and the Empty Homes Policy.
- 4.2 The Strategy supports the Community and Corporate Plan 2019-2023 to 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing', 'regenerate and re-invent our town centres' and to 'encourage a sustainably developed built environment. It also supports Torbay's Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, as well as the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026, the Torbay Carbon Plan (2023/25), the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and the Economic Growth Strategy to name but a few.
- 4.3 The Strategy sets out what the Council, and its partners, will be doing to improve the housing situation for our current and future residents. It sets out the approach we will take with all of our partners to work towards our vision. These are grouped into three priorities.

4.4 The priorities reflect the broad range of work that we do to meet local housing need, including developing affordable housing, maintaining housing standards, and helping people to stay independent in their own homes, whilst preventing homelessness. Within each theme officers have identified key aims of the Council, which are considered to directly contribute to the overall sense of community health and wellbeing in the Bay.

4.5 Our housing priorities:

1. Improve housing supply
2. Improve housing quality
3. Improve housing support

Our cross-cutting principles:

4. Put our customers first
5. Tackle climate change
6. Work in partnership

4.6 During 2022/23 there has been investment to:

- increase capacity across Planning and Housing to enhance the development of affordable homes
- tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions, including the review and reduction of empty homes
- enhance homeless reduction, such as investment in temporary accommodation and client support

4.7 The Chief Executive is currently reviewing the Housing structure to provide additional capacity to enable the delivery of new affordable homes and the development and production of Housing policy and strategies, which will link with Torbay's urban regeneration programme and the Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

4.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 9 February 2023 to consider the final draft Housing Strategy and Housing Strategy Project Plan (see Appendix 4 for their report) and made the following recommendations which have been incorporated into the final documents submitted to the Cabinet/Council.

"That the Cabinet be recommended:

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

a) that the Torbay Housing Strategy 2023-2030, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved, subject to the latest population figures being checked against the latest census data; and

b) subject to 1 above, the Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024, subject to:

- a realistic and attainable target for delivery of the number of affordable homes to be delivered each year; and
- to include targets to deliver a private rented sector improvement plan to tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions, proactively target non-compliant landlords by and take appropriate action where standards are not being met (target 2.1) and include actions and targets for improving housing conditions in social rented housing.

Recommendation to Overview and Scrutiny Board (Cabinet to note):

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board monitors the delivery of the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023/2024 as part of their Work Programme for 2023/2024.”

5 Options under consideration

- 5.1 Consider the consultation response from partners, members, stakeholders and note the wider response from the public consultation
- 5.2 As a result of consultation with the public, partners and stakeholders we have taken on a number of comments and suggestions and have amended the Strategy accordingly. In summary they are:
 - a. Clarify and better explain housing terms, such as ‘housing support’, geographic relief’ and the role of strategic partners.
 - b. Include the fact that affordable housing is key to attracting and retaining our workforce, supports the growth of our key employment sectors, such as tourism, fishing, hi-tech etc, reduces the levels of deprivation and meets the priorities in our Economic Growth Strategy.
 - c. Reinforce partner approach and that we are open to all methods of affordable housing delivery and that it is the Local Plan that dictates overall housing targets, as well as affordable homes.
 - d. Update the number of affordable homes required over the next eight years to ensure all of our strategies reflect the same target. This is the function of the Local Plan, and, until it is updated, we must adopt the Government’s ‘standard method’ calculation for the delivery of homes that places a requirement on Torbay to build 600 dwellings a year, plus a 20% (120) imposed ‘buffer’, due to the under-delivery of housing over the previous years. However, the Government is now looking at reducing its compulsory housebuilding targets, which will also be mentioned.
 - e. Ensure we include our partners in the voluntary sector to help us improve our support offer and take the opportunity to work closer to better understand how they

can assist and support our work, as well as listen to what is happening at a local level.

- 5.3 Recommend the adoption of a Housing Strategy for Torbay, including amendment recommendations from the consultation. Please see Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Consultation Report for more detail

6 Financial opportunities and implications

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications. Any financial commitments would be subject to further approval.
- 6.2 New homes and improved facilities are key ingredients in developing economic growth. It often goes unnoticed that increased capacity of schools, GP surgeries, new roads, community centres or sports facilities have been paid for as a direct result of housing development.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council's Housing Strategy must be 'fit for purpose' in terms of providing an overall framework against which the Council will formulate other more specific policies affecting its housing functions, which will ensure that the Council is capable of meeting its statutory functions as housing authority.
- 7.2 The Housing Strategy sets out the Council's priorities in terms of its housing ambitions, but the overall number of homes, including affordable housing is determined by the Local Plan update, a key statutory document. Once a local plan has been submitted, a Planning Inspector's role is to examine whether the submitted plan meets the tests of soundness defined in the National Planning Policy Framework and meets all the relevant legislative requirements, including the duty to co-operate
- 7.3 Until the new Local Plan is adopted, the Government's 'standard method' calculation for the delivery of homes places a requirement on Torbay to build 600 dwellings a year, plus a 20% (120) imposed 'buffer', due to the under-delivery of housing over the previous years. This may be revised by Government

[Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations](#)

8 Engagement and consultation

- 8.1 The draft Strategy has been developed Council wide and went out to consultation from 24 October to 5 December 2022; for just over 6 weeks. Please see Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Consultation Report

9 Purchasing or hiring of goods and/or services

- 9.1 It is not anticipated that the Housing Strategy itself will require the purchasing or hiring of goods and/or services. Should the Council wish to hire goods, or services to facilitate its strategic objectives, then more specific reports detailing this will be presented to Cabinet

10 Tackling climate change

- 10.1 One of the cross-cutting principles in the Strategy is to 'tackle climate change'. The Strategy also supports the Torbay Carbon Plan (2023/25), which has the following action 'Torbay Council to develop a new Housing Strategy and Action Plan that aims to Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty' (p20). Additionally, Torbay Council's Climate Emergency Officer has provided input into the development of this Strategy.

11 Associated risks

- 11.1 Not finding the Housing Strategy 'fit for purpose' and thus unable to provide an overall framework against which the Council will formulate other more specific policies affecting its housing functions
- 11.2 Reduced compulsory housebuilding targets from central Government will deliver fewer homes, particularly affordable homes

12 Equality impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

- 12.1 Our equality duties apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, gender and sexual orientation. Although not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Torbay Council recognises the profound and far-reaching impacts of socio-economic disadvantage and public health and treats these characteristics as protected.
- 12.2 The Strategy prioritises and supports low-income households, those fleeing domestic violence, care experienced children, vulnerable households eligible for grants to help heat their homes.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Helping older households remain independent at home		

People with caring Responsibilities			Neutral
People with a disability	Helping households remain independent at home		
Women or men	Particularly single parents, are more reliant on benefits and are consequently more vulnerable to welfare cuts and are also more likely to be eligible for means tested support		Neutral
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			Neutral
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			Neutral
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			Neutral
People who are transgendered			Neutral
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			Neutral
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Housing support for those escaping domestic violence		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	<p>Providing affordable housing for households on low incomes</p> <p>Improving energy efficiency, thus reducing the cost of heating the home</p> <p>Support people into jobs that will improve their quality of life and reduce homelessness</p>		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	<p>Improving housing conditions will positively impact health outcomes</p> <p>Tackle street homelessness and provide support</p>		

	Provision of temporary accommodation for those accepted as homeless		
--	---	--	--

13 Cumulative Council impact

- 13.1 Build on the Council's understanding about what our communities, stakeholders and partners want in relation to housing and planning and deliver agreed solutions that align with Council priorities

14 Cumulative community impacts

- 14.1 Reinforce our commitment to deliver against our Community and Corporate Plan 2019-2023 to 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing', 'regenerate and re-invent our town centres' and to 'encourage a sustainably developed built environment. It also supports Torbay's Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans
- 14.2 Help reduce carbon emissions and achieve a carbon neutral Torbay by 2030, and reduce household energy costs
- 14.3 Provide affordable housing to retain a sufficient workforce in Torbay
- 14.4 Prevent homelessness and address rough sleeping

DRAFT Housing Strategy

2023-2030

Contents

Introduction	3
External influences and local issues	4
Housing needs	4
Our housing ambition	4
The economic challenge.....	4
Strengths, challenges, and opportunities.....	5
Strengths	5
Challenges	6
Opportunities	7
Vision	8
Our Priorities	8
Improve housing supply.....	9
Improve housing quality.....	11
Improve housing support.....	12
Measuring success	14

Introduction

A home is special to everyone and directly contributes to good health, wellbeing, and life achievement. Having a place to call home is one of life's main goals. It offers warmth and shelter; and is the place where we feel safe and secure; a place to shape family.

Known as the English Riviera, Torbay comprises of three towns: Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham. Torbay has a population of c. 139,324, (62,992 households) and has an increasingly skilled workforce; increasing numbers of small and micro businesses; and a large catchment population. The recent investment in the A380 South Devon link road, directly connecting Torbay with the M5 at Exeter, has significantly reduced travel times locally and regionally making the Torbay area an increasingly attractive place to live and work.

It is a place of huge ambition, and we want it to be the best place for children to grow, for people to live and work and for residents to fulfil their ambitions today and for many years to come.

However, Torbay is facing a housing crisis. There is a shortage of new housing supply and particularly affordable housing.

This strategy sets the vision and approach we will take through our leadership; and by working with partners to 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing'.

We have the foundations in place to build more affordable homes through our urban and town regeneration plans; our housing company TorVista and the Torbay Strategic Housing Board.

By working with our partners, we will achieve more, giving more families a home and more children the best possible start in life.

We will prioritise brownfield locations in our towns to reduce the impact on the climate and endeavour to protect our natural environment and continue to seek new potential sites. We will create jobs and investment to support inclusive economic growth and make safe homes for residents and their families.

Whilst the council and its partners face many significant challenges, we are determined to provide appropriate and affordable homes, particularly for those with the greatest need.

We recognise the challenges of providing new affordable homes in the current economic conditions and the climate challenge.

Separate to this Housing Strategy an Action Plan will be developed to deliver our vision for housing in Torbay. The Action Plan will be an agile document, which we will use to monitor progress and it will be overseen by a cross-directorate Housing Delivery Group.

External influences and local issues

Housing needs

Housing needs for Torbay have been objectively assessed in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework guidance, which, taking into account local policy added targets for employment growth, estimate that 615 new homes are required to be provided per year over the Local Plan period. However, as part of the Examination of the Torbay Local Plan, this figure was reduced to 495 homes per year to reflect environmental constraints in Torbay.

Consequently, the adopted Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 identifies land for the delivery of around 8,900 new homes over the plan period and we are reviewing our current Local Plan.

Our housing ambition

A balanced housing market is essential to sustainable communities, but this will not be achieved without the right level of new housing development, across all tenures. As well as providing desperately needed new homes, house building also delivers substantial benefits and better facilities for the wider community. The affordability and environmental sustainability of homes will be crucial factors in getting the balance right between homes, jobs, the green environment and protecting the climate.

We already know from our community led neighbourhood plans, that protecting the natural environment of Torbay is a priority; along with providing more affordable homes; reducing the impact of climate change and creating a sustainable economy. It will be necessary to strike a balance between competing priorities.

There is little appetite for green field development despite the level of additional homes required. However, we need to find more sites to meet future demand. So, we need to be bold, innovative, and creative, in the delivering of those additional homes.

The economic challenge

The current economic backdrop provides challenges for us all, including housebuilders and registered providers.

The English Riviera Destination management plan 2022-2030 to make Torbay the UK's premier visitor destination and help boost the local economy was approved at Council in August 2022. The new plan sets out the interventions that can help propel the English Riviera forward, building on the strengths of the destination and the opportunities to achieve a more sustainable and resilient destination.

There has been a huge increase in demand for available properties, both rented and for home ownership. This has pushed up local prices and rents, making it much more difficult for households to afford. Rents are now well above the Housing Benefit rates, and we are seeing an increasing number of households at risk of homelessness.

Providing access to affordable housing is key to the growth of key sectors such as tourism, fishing, hi-tec and medical & health care, creative and digital technologies.

We need to continue to attract and retain our workforce in Torbay and to meet the gap created by vacancies outstripping availability in our local workforce. This will support growth, reduce levels of deprivation and enable our residents to thrive and reach their economic potential

Families on Housing Benefit are struggling to afford private rents and the Council continues to lobby government on Local Housing Allowance rates to reflect the challenging rental market specific to Torbay.

Additionally, since the energy price cap was lifted at the beginning of 2022, we have seen heating and electricity costs rise by over 50%, which has come alongside increases in the cost of food, taxes and other everyday expenses.¹

Strengths, challenges, and opportunities

Strengths

The council has put the foundations in place to kick start delivery of affordable homes in Torbay, as set out in our **Community and Corporate Plan** objective to **'Improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing'**

We will ensure we put our residents and clients first; we continue to tackle climate change and we work in partnership to achieve better outcomes. We will focus on preventing and alleviating homelessness and we will continue to do everything we can to make sure our residents are treated fairly.

We are taking action to improve supply:

- Through the Torbay master plan for town centre and waterfront regeneration to support sustainable, residential communities
- The refreshed English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-2030 to make Torbay the UK's premier visitor destination and help boost the local economy
- Progressing sites and regeneration identified in the Local Plan growth areas
- Working with Torbay strategic housing board (TSHB) and others to create more opportunities to identify and progress schemes
- Delivering 100+ new homes (maximising affordable homes) on the Preston Down Road site
- Seeking a strategic partner(s) to deliver more affordable homes on small challenging sites
- Purchasing up to 36 homes to meet current demand for family Temporary Accommodation (TA), with the option to use these homes for longer term affordable rentals as we tackle and reduce the need for TA

¹ Cost of living rises for households: ONS.gov.uk

- Delivering new homes through modern construction, such as modular build pilots currently under consideration for two sites.
- Commissioning 72 units to meet older people's supported housing need
- Investing in property to increase the supply of social rent homes in Torbay.
- By adopting an Empty Homes Policy and recruiting an Empty Homes Officer to help bring empty homes back into use
- By pledging financial support to introduce Interim Management Orders within the private rented sector to raise standards for tenants
- Continuing to make the best use of existing social housing through Devon Home Choice plus our Rightsizing and empty homes project
- TorVista to deliver new homes

Challenges

- 42% of CO₂ emissions in Torbay are from domestic homes (2019)
- Private rental properties are well above the local Housing Benefit rates (LHA)
- 68% of households renting privately rely on Housing Benefit, higher than national (48%) and regional (44%) averages
- 8% social rented stock in Torbay; 18% national average
- Current delivery of homes built is an average of 343 per year, the Local Plan target is 720
- By 2040 one in three (34%) of Torbay's population will be over 65
- Lack of small and medium sized building contractors in the Bay to tackle smaller sites

We know that, for our residents:

- Housing is unaffordable to many in Torbay. The average house price in Torbay is nine times average annual earnings and house prices have increased significantly post 2020
- Increasing demand for holiday accommodation has reduced the availability of accommodation for local people
- Homelessness in Torbay is over twice the national and regional averages
- One third (38%) of households are being made homeless due to the end of a private rented tenancy
- Homes becoming available through the Housing Register have fallen 6% since 2019

In Torbay:

- Housing need outstrips demand for new affordable homes
- Demand for temporary accommodation has increased over the last 12-24 months
- There is not enough brownfield land across the Bay to provide all the homes Torbay needs, and the cost of any site clearance means there is less money to build affordable homes
- The cliff like and hilly nature of Torbay makes site development challenging

- Our small developments can reduce affordable housing delivery, as units fall below planning obligation thresholds
- Regeneration takes time due to site assembly, market appetite and financing complexities
- A low growth local Plan to protect the environment can reduce the opportunities to build new homes
- The challenging economic climate is making house building difficult. Financial uncertainty, cost of materials, and labour shortages are delaying housebuilding

Opportunities

Whilst accepting that there are significant challenges in providing decent homes for all our residents it is important to recognise that there are opportunities that can help us achieve this, including:

- The Government's new Affordable Homes Programme (2021 to 2026) managed by Homes England. By working with Homes England, we hope to deliver more affordable homes through new build, residential led regeneration and purchase and repair of existing stock
- The Torbay Affordable Housing Development Partnership, which was established in 2022 to work more closely with Homes England, registered providers, and other stakeholders to increase the overall provision of affordable housing
- TorVista Homes Limited, which was awarded registered provider status in 2021. As a new registered housing provider, wholly owned by the council; its aim is to deliver a wide range of good quality, affordable and supported housing
- The Council announced a 'climate crisis' in 2021, making a commitment that Torbay will be carbon neutral by 2030
- Our Local Plan is under review and sets out how the need for homes of all types will be delivered together with jobs and infrastructure
- We have created the Torbay Strategic Housing Board to promote our ambitions and actively engage with partners to help increase housing supply and be a critical friend
- We are maximising the use of existing social housing stock through our Rightsize programme and working with owners of empty properties to bring them back into use
- We are working on economic and urban regeneration plans to increase the supply of new homes in Torbay

We are co-ordinating infrastructure improvements to support economic and town centre regeneration including increasing the supply of new homes

Vision

The housing vision for Torbay is to:

Improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing

To achieve this vision, we will:

- Work across the Council and with partners to come up with innovative ideas and modern build techniques to increase the delivery of affordable housing for rent and ownership
- Deliver a diverse choice of housing for our residents that meets every stage of life and lifestyle
- Support our communities to improve and maintain their homes; to be safe, warm, fit for purpose and be more environmentally friendly
- Continue to protect homeless households and those threatened with homelessness, whilst putting an end to street sleeping.

Our Priorities

Our housing priorities are:

- Improve housing supply
- Improve housing quality
- Improve housing support

Our cross-cutting principles:

- Put our residents and customers first
- Tackle climate change
- Work in partnership

These aspirations are underpinned by our community and corporate visions:

- Thriving people
- Thriving economy
- Tackle climate change
- Council fit for the future

Within each priority we have identified key areas of work that we believe will directly contribute to the overall sense of community health and wellbeing in Torbay.

Improve housing supply

We will:

1. Build affordable homes for rent
2. Build homes for low-cost ownership
3. Build and acquire innovative and specialist homes
4. Make the best use of the existing housing stock

This is important because:

- Need on the Housing Register has increased by 50%, since 2018, with over 1,600 applicants now in housing need
- The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) identifies a local need for 721 affordable homes per year: 387 for rent and 334 for low-cost sale
- The Government requirement on Torbay is to build 720 dwellings a year
- Torbay is the corporate parent to nearly 5 times as many children and young people as the England average (302, compared with 62), with a 42% increase since 2011
- There is a distinct lack of larger family homes, both in the private rented and social sectors

We want local households to have access to quality housing that they can afford in a range of tenures. Open market housing is the main route to securing the delivery of affordable housing via S106 planning obligations. However, affordable housing can also be provided using Government grants and the Council's assets, including land. The majority of this delivery is focused in urban areas, yet we recognise the need for smaller development in our less urban communities.

Homes built for rent by registered providers are the only type of homes that remain affordable for the majority of low-income households in Torbay. Traditionally, homes let on social rents are around 60% of the local market rent, but in 2010 the government introduced a new 'affordable rent' at rents on new homes of up to 80% of market rent levels.

Since 2016, we have delivered an average of 339 market homes each year, 59 (17%) of which have been affordable. At the current trajectory, with no additional greenfield allocation, Torbay is likely to only develop up to 50 affordable units a year through the Section 106 developer contributions. To meet the total need on the Housing Register with new builds alone would take 32 years.

Our strategy proposes a mix of Homes England grant and local housing investment, such as Council land and assets, with a view to establishing two thirds affordable homes for rent and one third for low cost ownership. We will also strive to maximise energy efficiency, making our homes more affordable to heat and run.

Torbay Council and our NHS partners want to increase independent living; allowing people receiving social care and support to have a greater choice and control over how, where and with

whom they live. Whilst we are commissioning 72 units of extra care for people to live well for longer in a home of their own, there is more to do.

There is also an urgent need to create housing stock that provides independent living and move-on accommodation options for our care experienced young people.

To improve housing supply, we will:

- Use Council land and the redevelopment of existing buildings to create new affordable homes and sustainable communities
- Look to establish a strategic housing partnership to progress our affordable home delivery programme
- Maximise opportunities to deliver affordable homes through Homes England's new Affordable Homes Programme (2021 to 2026)
- Work with TorVista, the Council's wholly owned Housing Delivery Company to deliver specialised housing for older people, for those with learning disabilities and autism and for people with enduring mental ill health
- Deliver more homes to improve the outcomes for our care experienced leavers
- Purchase up to 36 self-contained properties in the Bay to help accommodate homeless households to help them move-on into more permanent homes
- Work with 'build for rent' developers to investigate funds, suitable land, or property to accommodate a shared housing project
- Bring empty homes back into use, making them affordable to rent where appropriate
- Deliver Torbay Council's 'Right-Sizing Project', to free up much needed larger family homes and developing larger homes if necessary

We will work with our partners to increase supply:

- We will pro-actively build strong partnerships with Homes England, landowners, registered providers, and local communities to improve the delivery of new homes
- Through our Economic partnership work with Home England, neighbouring authorities, NHS, local colleges, local landowners, developers and employers to find solutions to new, existing, and stalled development sites
- Through the Torbay Strategic Housing Board, working in partnership to build stronger relationships to increase the supply of new homes, including affordable and supported housing
- Utilise TorVista to deliver additional homes
- Work with our RP partners to deliver additional homes
- Encourage developers to progress sites that have received planning permission, but are not coming forward in a timely fashion
- Look to explore alternative solutions such as self-build and modular build for challenging sites to deliver new homes

To understand future needs/demand, we will:

- Gather evidence to better understand where our unmet housing need is coming from

- Better understand local housing need by regularly reviewing applications on the Housing Register and predicted demand from children's and adult services, local colleges and employers
- Undertake a structured review of planning policies to make sure that they are relevant, joined-up, straightforward and encourage development, particularly on brownfield sites

Improve housing quality

We will:

1. Tackle conditions in the private rented sector
2. Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
3. Keep people independent at home

This is important because:

- In addition to working with landlords to improve standards, on average, Torbay Council serves 49 legal notices to remedy disrepair each year.
- Nearly 20% of our enforcement work was to remedy poor heating in people's homes.
- There is a higher proportion of homes in private rented sector in Torbay (27%) compared to England (20%)
- Three quarters (75%) of Torbay's housing stock's energy performance is below band C, for England it's just over half (54%)

Housing has a key role to play in health and wellbeing. The poor condition of a property can negatively affect the physical and mental health of our residents. Similarly, some people's physical health needs, particularly for older residents, can restrict their ability to live an independent life without some adaptations to the home.

The expansion of the private rented sector has focused attention on the need to improve conditions in this tenure. The English Housing Survey (EHS) estimates that in 2019, 23% of these homes did not meet the Decent Home Standard. This compares with 18% of owner-occupied and 12% of social-rented homes.

The housing conditions in the private rented sector are worse than for any other, so making sure that the quality and standard of the private rented sector is a priority for us. We also focus much of our work in this sector because tenants have little, or no control over getting remedial works carried out, so we use all the tools available to take action against poor standards.

The main enforcement issues identified relate to poor heating, risk of fire, damp and mould and falls. The Housing Standards Team identified and remedied 578 housing hazards last year, resulting in a significant cost saving to the NHS and wider society.

A key theme running through our plans is a commitment to become carbon neutral. The carbon emissions from our area will fall as our homes and businesses become more energy efficient. The widespread reliance on gas as an energy source will mean few households will be immune from rising bills. However, homes with poor fuel efficiency will be hit hardest by energy price rises.

Households who live in a property they own or rent from a registered provider have the least likelihood of being fuel poor at 8% and 19% respectively. However, households living in privately rented accommodation are most likely to be fuel poor (25%).

The scale of the issues facing the private rented sector are such that the answer does not lie with regulation alone. We must create the right environment to encourage self-compliance by working alongside landlords, property agents and landlord associations.

To improve housing quality, we will:

- Tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions by proactively targeting non-compliant landlords, taking appropriate action where standards are not being met
- Support communities to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and meet our carbon neutral target, tackle fuel poverty, and reduce carbon emissions
- Help households adapt existing homes, so they can remain independent for longer
- Regularly consult with our customers to improve service design and delivery

Improve housing support

We will:

1. Prevent homelessness
2. Offer support packages to stabilise a household's housing situation
3. Help households sustain accommodation

This is important because:

- Need on the Housing Register has increased by 50%, since 2018, with over 1,600 applicants now in housing need.
- Typically, households who rent privately spend around 35% of their income on housing costs, compared to 18% for those with a mortgage, or 29% in social housing.
- There has been a 92% increase in use and stay of temporary accommodation for homeless households since 2019 [169, 37% families (2022)]
- The most common reasons for homelessness is the loss of a private rented home (38%), family and friends no longer able to accommodate (19%) and domestic abuse (13%)
- Last year the Housing Team received around 13,000 requests. Calls about being 'homeless tonight' increased by 12%
- Around 24 people a month sleep rough in Torbay

Homelessness has a serious and harmful effect on those who experience it. Our approach is to act at the earliest opportunity, before individuals, or families lose their home. We are developing a separate homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that will be published during the life of this strategy.

Our primary focus is upon helping households to remain in their own home, provided that it is safe and suitable for them to do so. There are a number of in-house services available to help households remain in their homes, including: money advice, mediation and partnership work to tackle harassment and domestic abuse. We must also be mindful to work with partners to help us improve our support offer, for example, our voluntary and community groups, who are the eyes and ears of the community. We will take the opportunity to work closer to better understand how they can assist and support our work, as well as listen to what is happening at a local level.

It is not always appropriate for people to remain in their existing home and sometimes it is not possible to prevent homelessness. Over recent years we have seen a steady rise in demand for temporary accommodation, with many households placed in increasingly costly and sometimes unsuitable accommodation. This is having a significant impact on Council budgets.

Due to the low provision of social homes and new build affordable homes Torbay is reliant upon the private rented sector to meet its homelessness duties. However, recent rental increases have pushed this type of accommodation beyond the reach of low-income households, particularly for families. Additionally, some landlords are converting to the holiday market, both permanently, and across the summer months.

Three quarters of homeless households are re-housed in the private rented sector, more than twice the national average. However, as tenancies in this sector are less secure than other tenure and can create a repeating cycle of homelessness.

The theme throughout this strategy is to make sure that the entire system is working to prevent all forms of homelessness, but also to work across the Council, and with partners to deliver more affordable homes, and work with the private rented sector to promote longer, more secure tenancies.

To improve housing support, we will:

- Continue to improve the Housing Options Service, to make sure that we give residents high quality, accessible advice when they need it
- Work with members, partners, and clients to develop a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that is fit for purpose and meets statutory and legislative requirements
- Improve engagement with private and social landlords, letting agencies and tenants to promote compliance and the importance of those threatened with homelessness seeking help at an early stage
- Develop a domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy with an emphasis on moving victims to safe and secure accommodation
- Work with partners to create sustainable tenancies through local employment, training, and education

Measuring success

We will measure our success through the following indicators

Improving housing supply

- Total additional homes provided
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Number of households housed through the Housing Register

Improving housing quality

- Number of home hazards remedied/disrepair resolved
- Number of homes fitted with adaptations to help people remain independent
- Number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures

Improving housing support

- Average number of single households, including couples, in temporary accommodation on any one night per quarter
- Average number of families, including pregnant, in temporary accommodation on any one night per quarter
- Number of new homelessness cases per quarter
- The % of homelessness cases that were taken at the prevention stage
- Number of families in bed and breakfast for longer than 6 weeks
- Number of families where Children's Services have a duty to accommodate in temporary accommodation
- Number of children where Children's Services have a duty to accommodate in temporary accommodation
- Number of rough sleepers per year

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.
For more information, please contact housing@torbay.gov.uk

Appendix 2 – Consultation Report



1 Housing Strategy Consultation Report

1.1. The consultation exercise was undertaken for 6 weeks, from 24 October to 5 December 2022. Details of the consultation were sent to the following groups and platforms, (including potential reach):

1. Torbay Housing Development Partnership (27)
2. Devon Home Choice applicants (1,600)
3. Living Options
4. Elected members (briefing)
5. Households in temporary accommodation (160)
6. Neighbourhood forums - Planning
7. Senior Voice of Devon
8. Town Councils: Brixham, Paignton, Torquay (press release distribution list)
9. Torbay Strategic Housing Board (32)
10. Housing associations: newsletters to tenants etc (press release distribution list)
11. Schools and colleges (also asking to share with parents)
12. Local businesses, via Torbay Development Agency (including the Black and Minority Ethnic Network)
13. Local churches and other faith organisations (press release distribution list)
14. Torbay Community Development Trust (press release distribution list)
15. Community Partnerships (press release distribution list)
16. Ward councillors
17. Riviera Business Improvement Districts
18. Public sector partners such as the local NHS, Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and a range of others (press release distribution list)
19. Voluntary sector partners (press release distribution list)
20. Administrators of local Facebook groups and pages
21. Devon Equality Network
22. Churston, Galmpton and Boodsands Neighbourhood Forum
23. Sports clubs (press release distribution list)
24. Torbay Council, TDA and SWISCo staff (917)
25. Local environmental groups (press release distribution list)
26. Harbours
27. Devon Communities (press release distribution list)
28. Food safety - business support (5,358)
29. One Torbay newsletter (9,223)
30. Facebook (12K followers)
31. Twitter (12.8k followers)

Both the Local Plan Update and the Housing Strategy were out to consultation at the same time and consultees were encouraged to undertake both.

- 1.2. 186 people took part in the main survey (58% female, 38% male), from which we received 292 comments and suggestions. 10 people took part in the longer, more in depth supplementary survey for housing stakeholders.
- 1.3. The majority of respondents (79%) were over 45 years of age. Of these 74% owned their own home, 12% rented privately and 8% rented from a social landlord. The remaining 6% were either in temporary accommodation or staying with friends/family.
- 1.4. The online survey results generally demonstrate an endorsement of the Strategy's three priorities and the three cross-cutting principles, which support the Council's ambition to 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing' (Community and Corporate Plan 2019-2023)
- 1.5. Percentage of respondents who 'strongly agree and agree' for each priority and principle:
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Improve housing supply | 71% |
| 2. Improve housing quality | 84% |
| 3. Improve housing support | 69% |
| 4. Put the customer first | 76% |
| 5. Tackle climate change | 65% |
| 6. Work in partnership | 64% |
- 1.6. For more detail, please see the 'Survey Response Report', pages 3 to 18

Housing Strategy survey

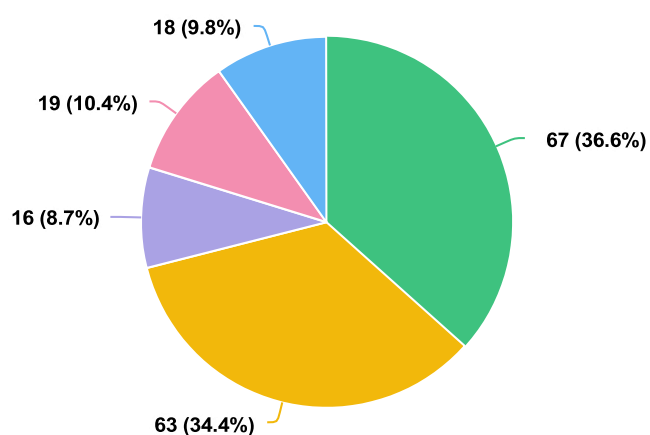
SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

24 October 2022 - 05 December 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Have your say on our new Housing Strategy

Q1 | The Strategy's first priority is to 'improve housing supply'. Do you agree with this priority?



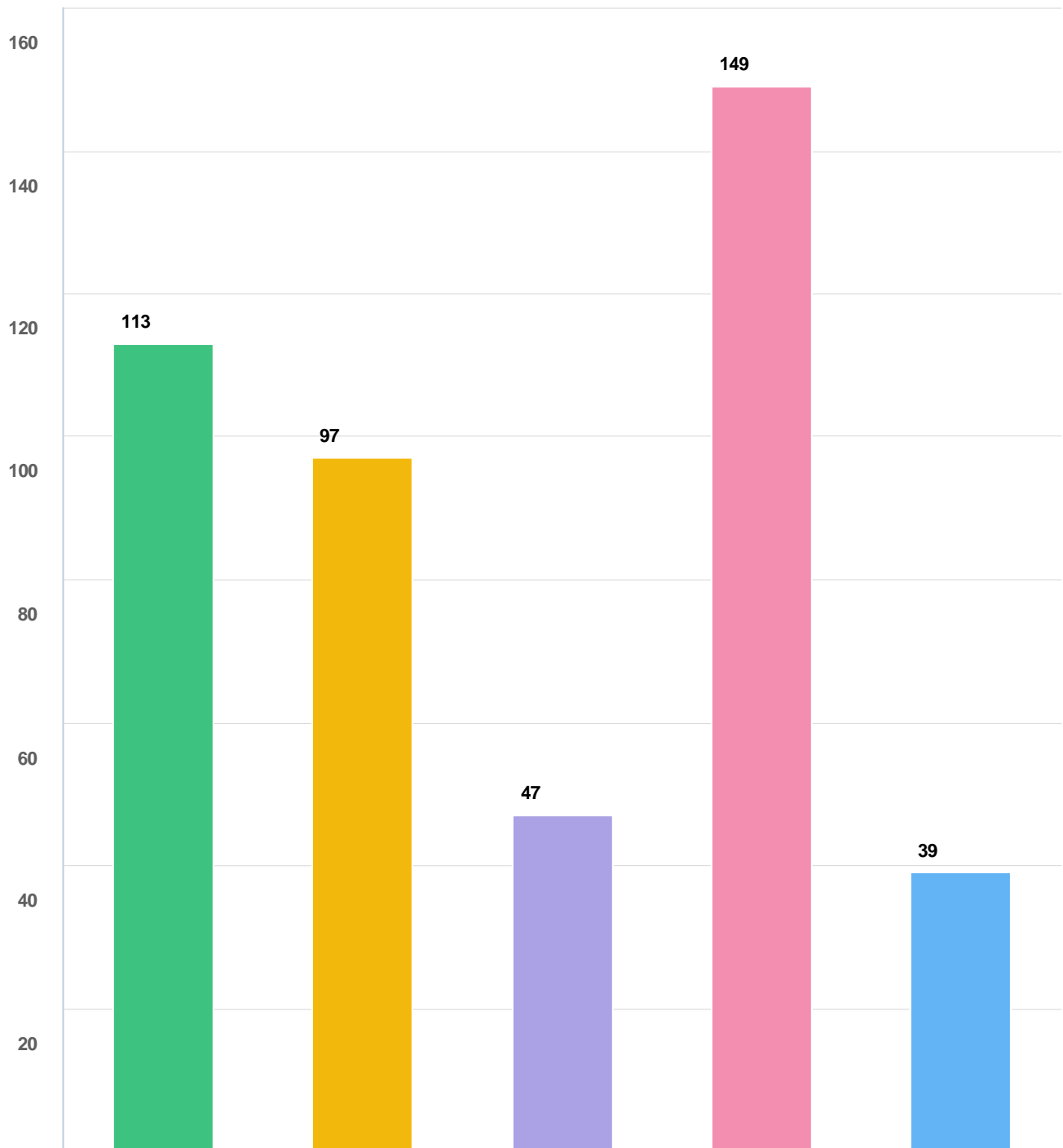
Question options

● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree, or disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree

Optional question (182 response(s), 4 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q2 Under this priority we have identified 4 key actions. With which of the following do you agree with? You can choose as many as you want.



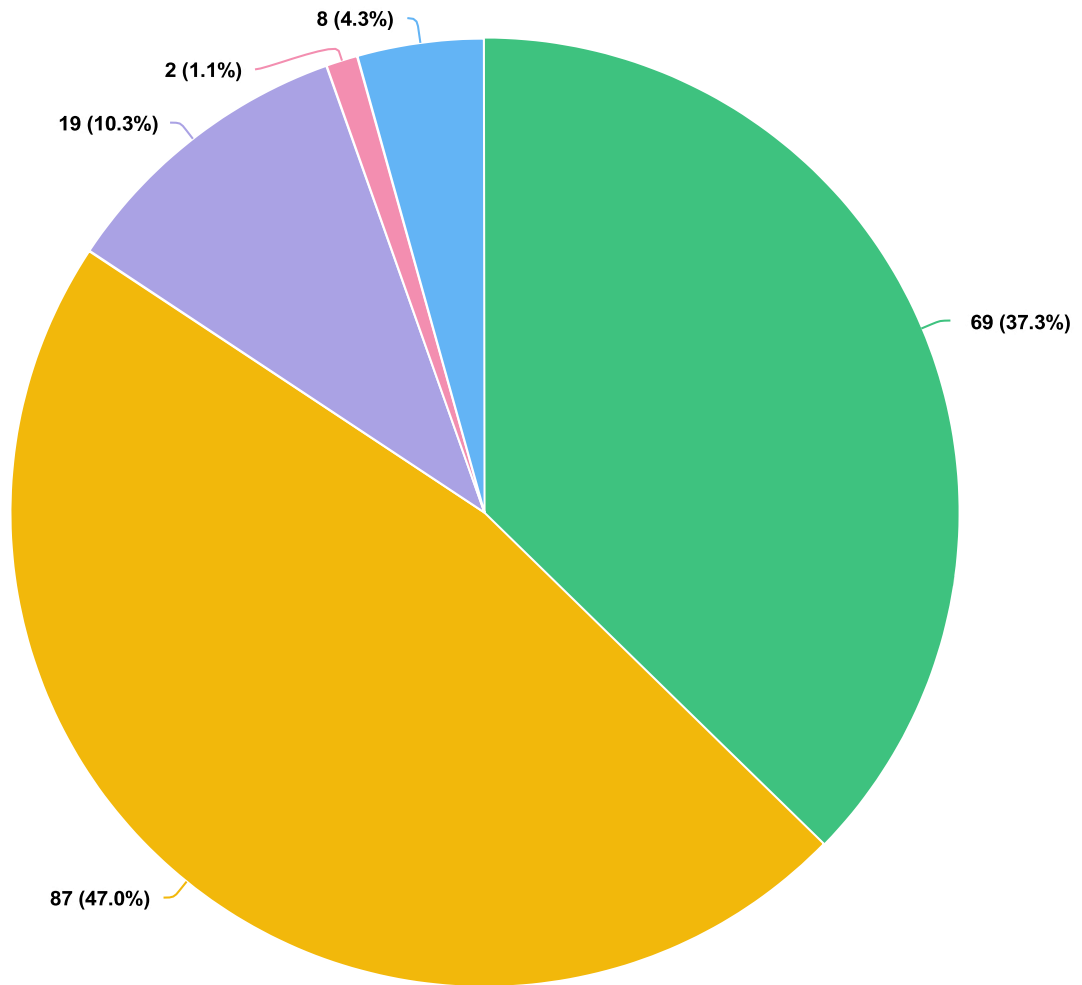
Question options

- ☒ Build affordable homes for rent ☒ Build homes for low-cost ownership ☐ Build and acquire innovative and specialist homes ☒ Make better use of our housing stock ☐ Other priority, please say:

Optional question (184 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q3 | The Strategy's second priority is to 'improve housing quality'. Do you agree with this priority?



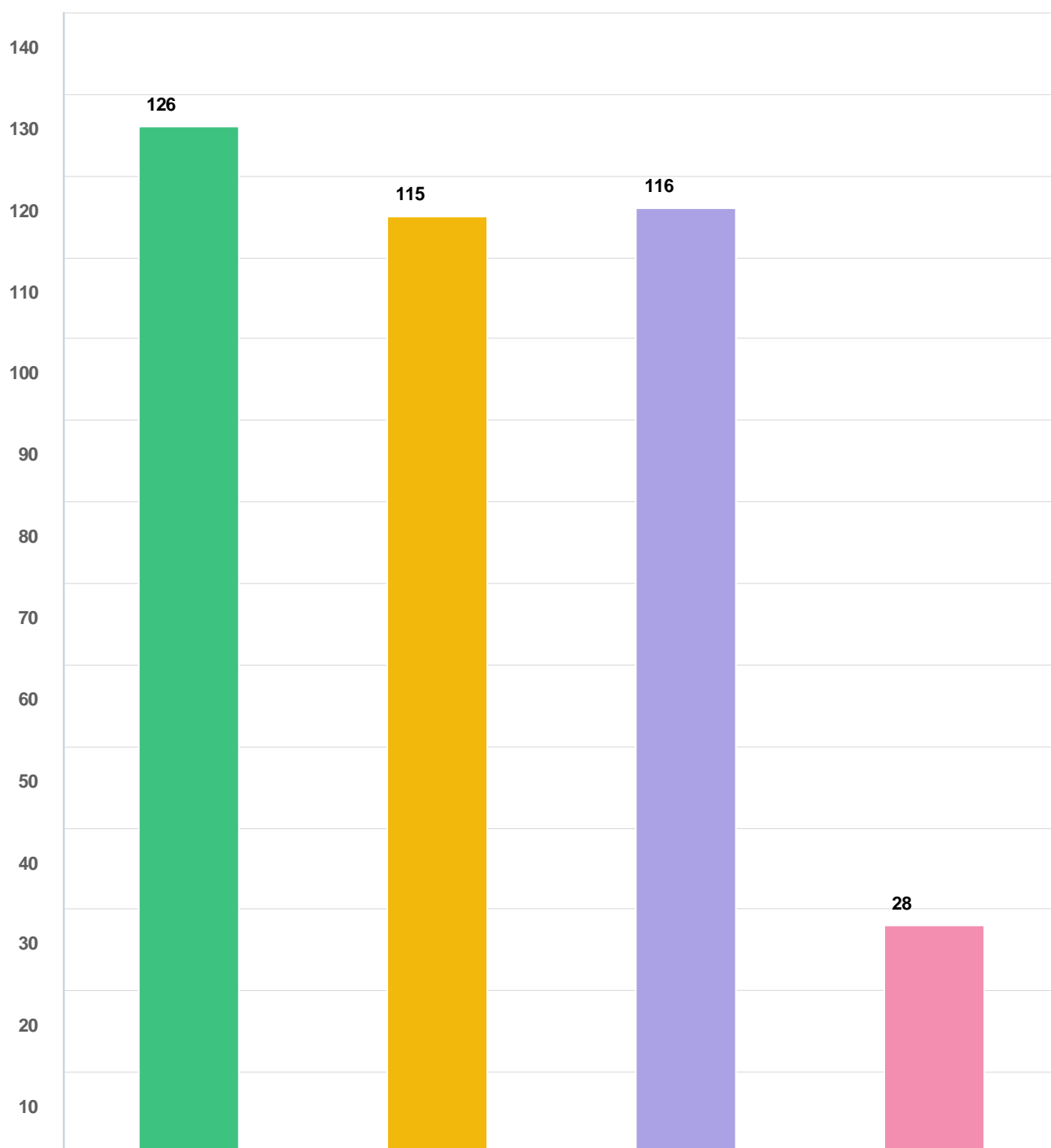
Question options

● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree, or disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree

Optional question (184 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 Under this priority we have identified 3 key actions. Which of the actions do you agree with? You can choose as many as you want.



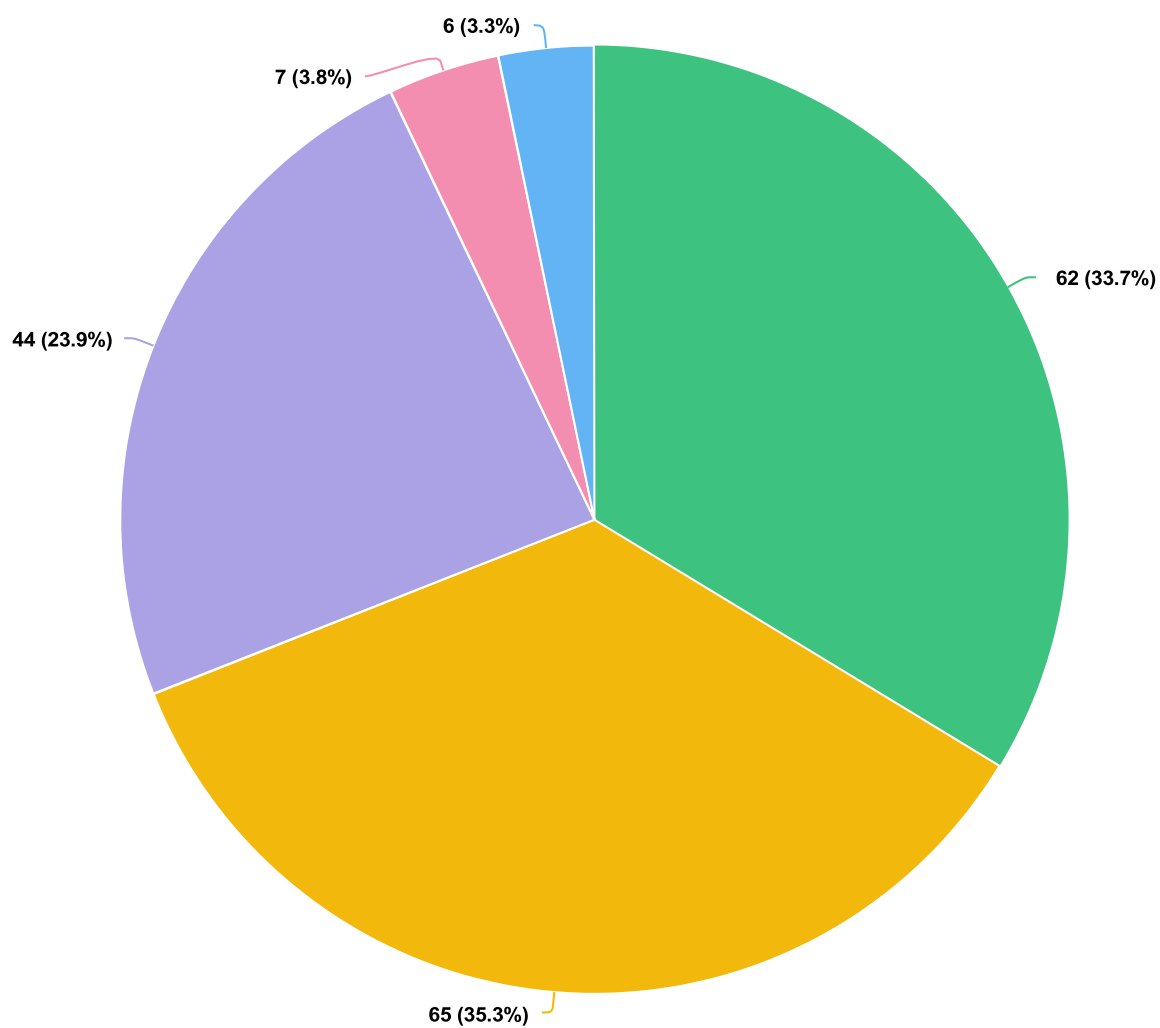
Question options

- ☒ Tackle conditions in the private rented sector ☒ Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
☒ Keep people independent at home ☐ Other priority, please say:

Optional question (183 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q5 | The Strategy's third priority is to 'improve housing support'. Do you agree with this priority?



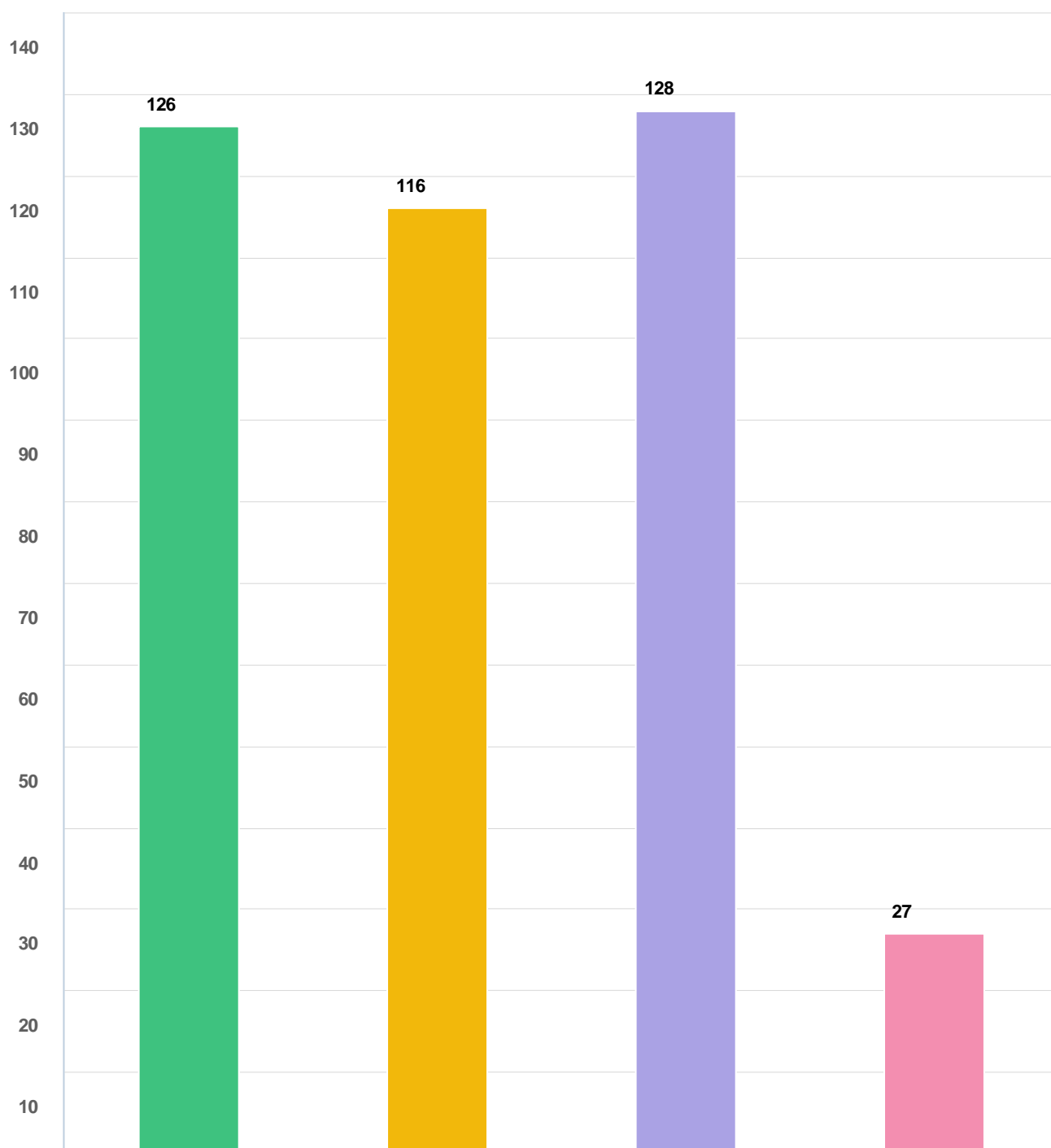
Question options

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree, or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Optional question (183 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q6 Under this priority we have identified 3 key actions. Which of the actions do you agree with? You can choose as many as you want.



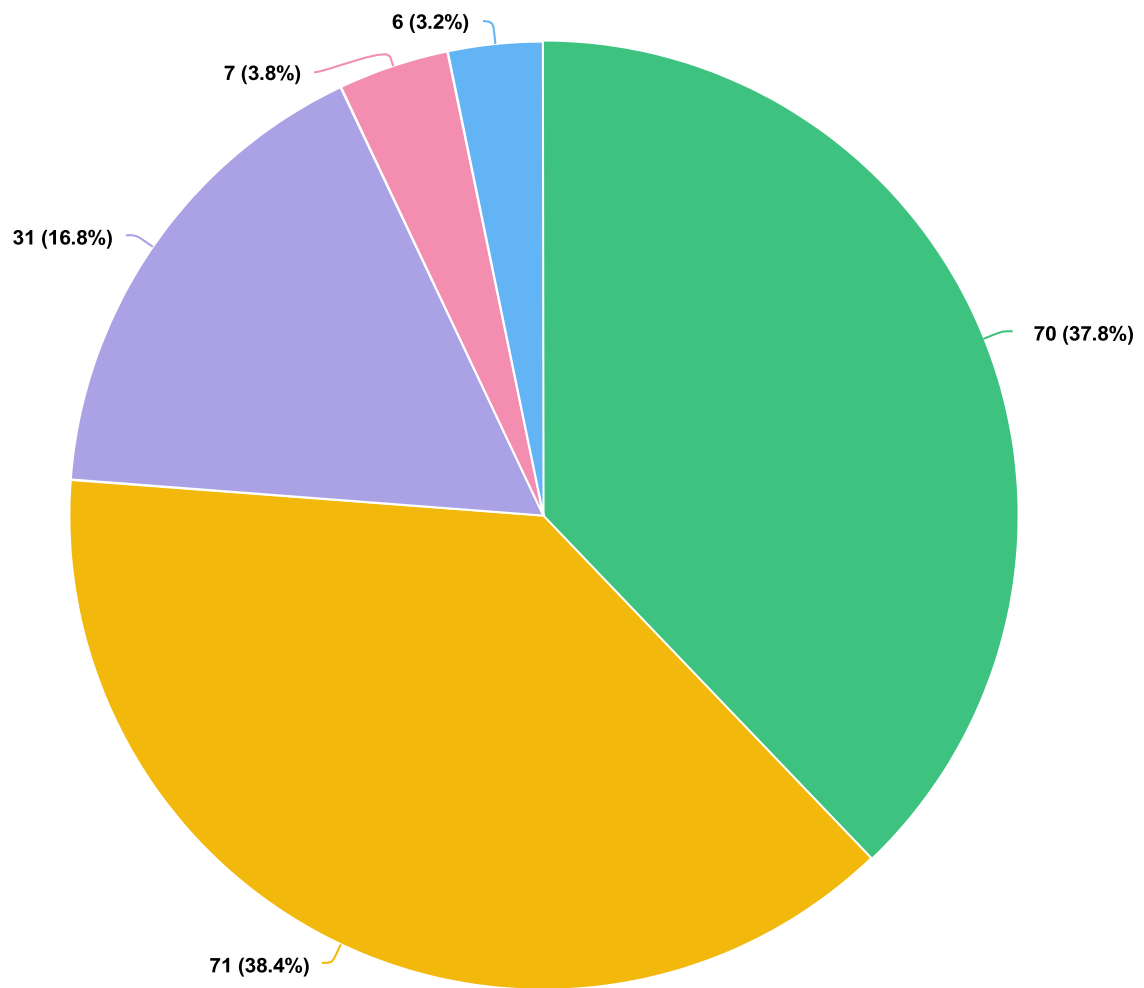
Question options

- Prevent homelessness ● Offer intervention, for example, advice, support and temporary accommodation
● Help households sustain accommodation ● Other priority, please say:

Optional question (182 response(s), 4 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q7 | The Strategy aims to 'put the customer first'. Do you agree with this principle? See our Customer Service Standards



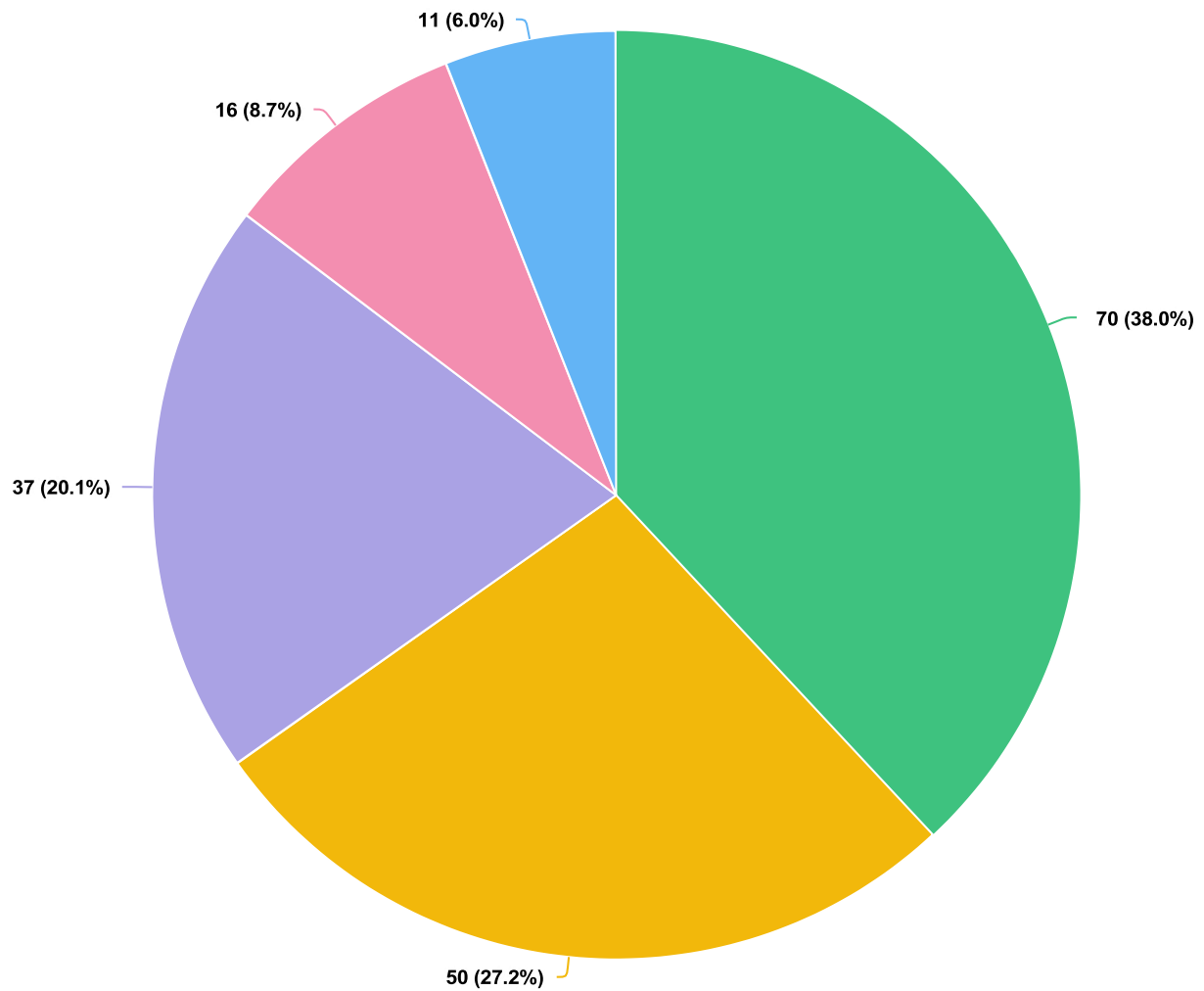
Question options

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree, or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Optional question (184 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q8 The Strategy aims to 'tackle climate change'. Do you agree with this principle?



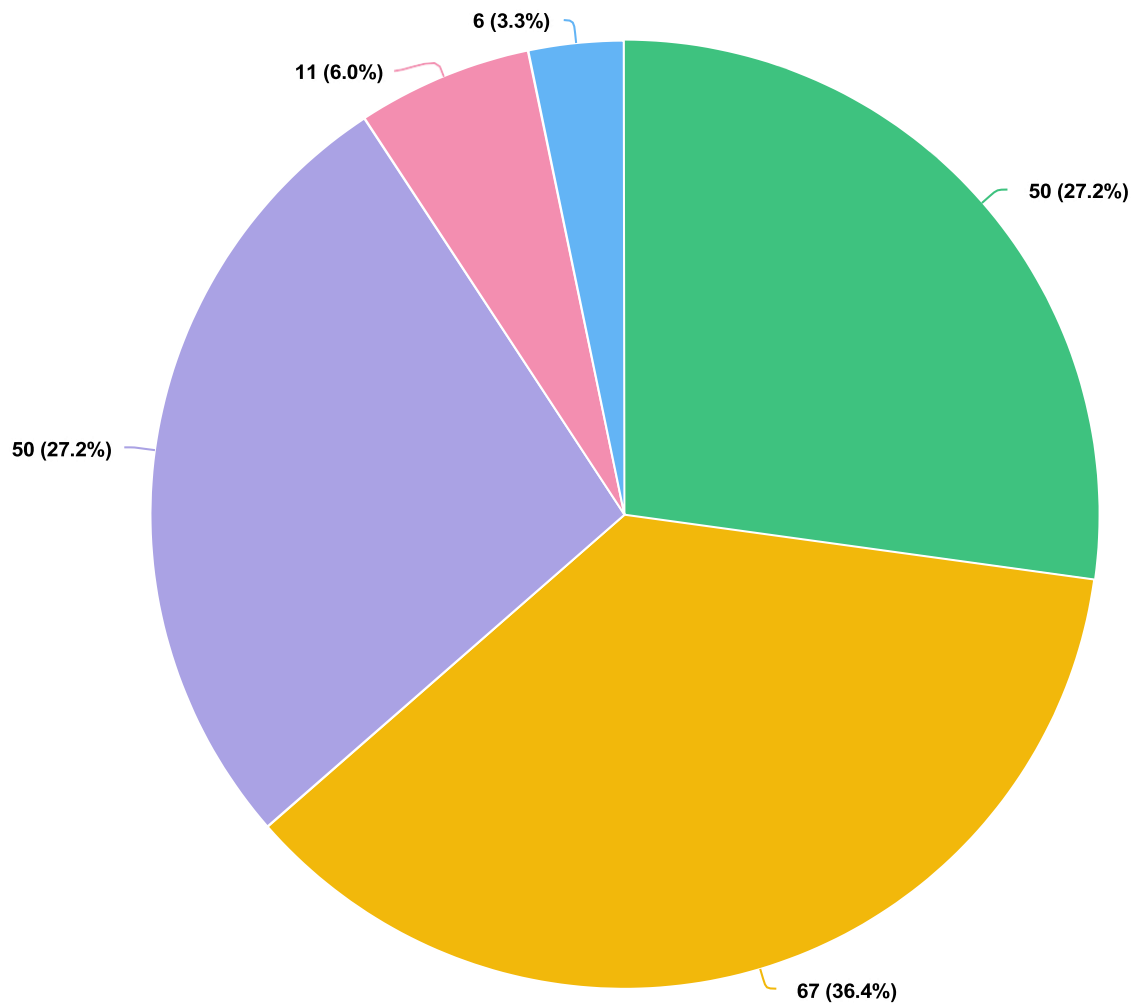
Question options

☒ Strongly agree ☒ Agree ☒ Neither agree, or disagree ☒ Disagree ☒ Strongly disagree

Optional question (183 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q9 The Strategy aims to 'work in partnership'. Do you agree with this principle?



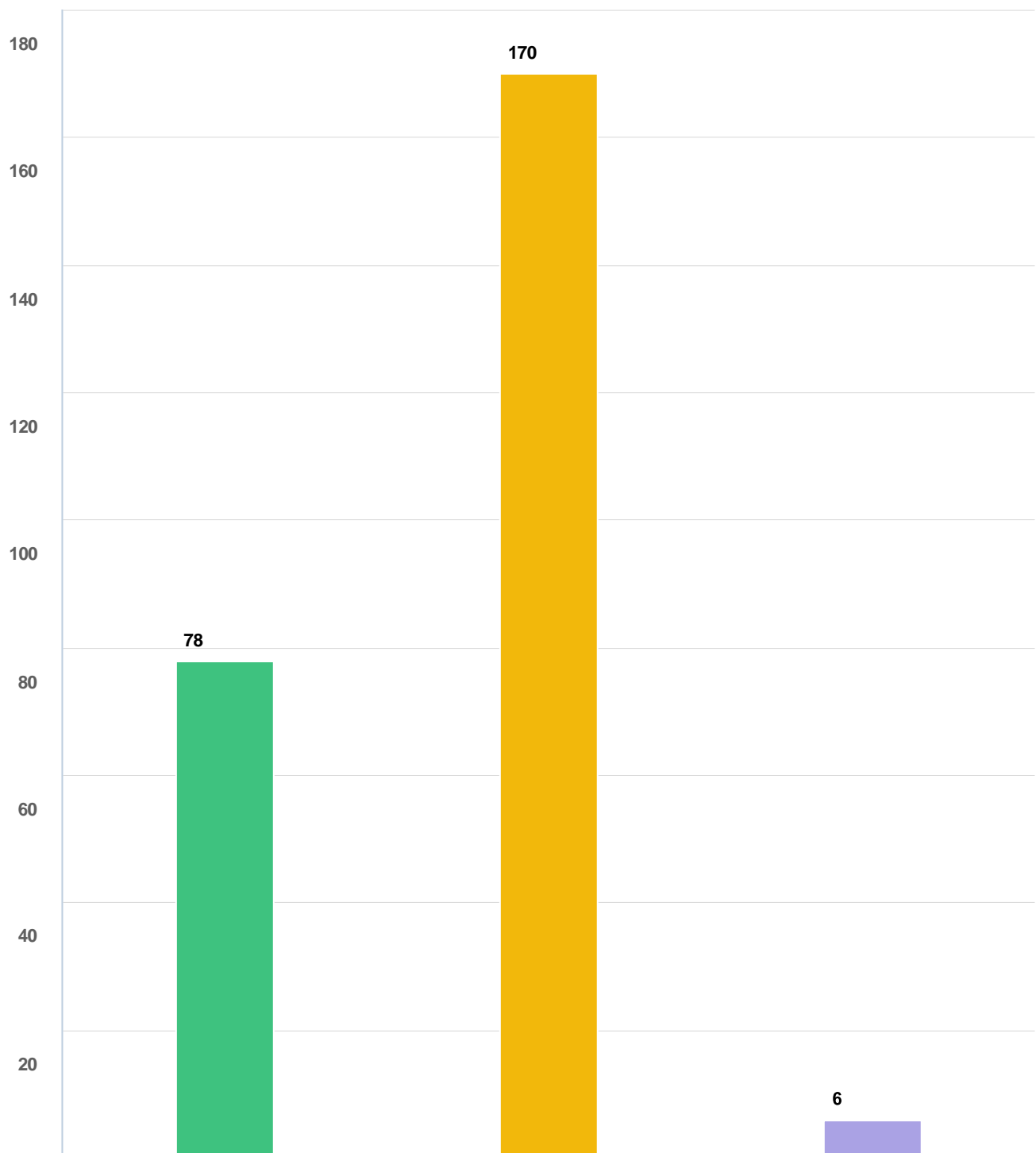
Question options

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree, or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Optional question (183 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q10 Do you work, or live in Torbay?



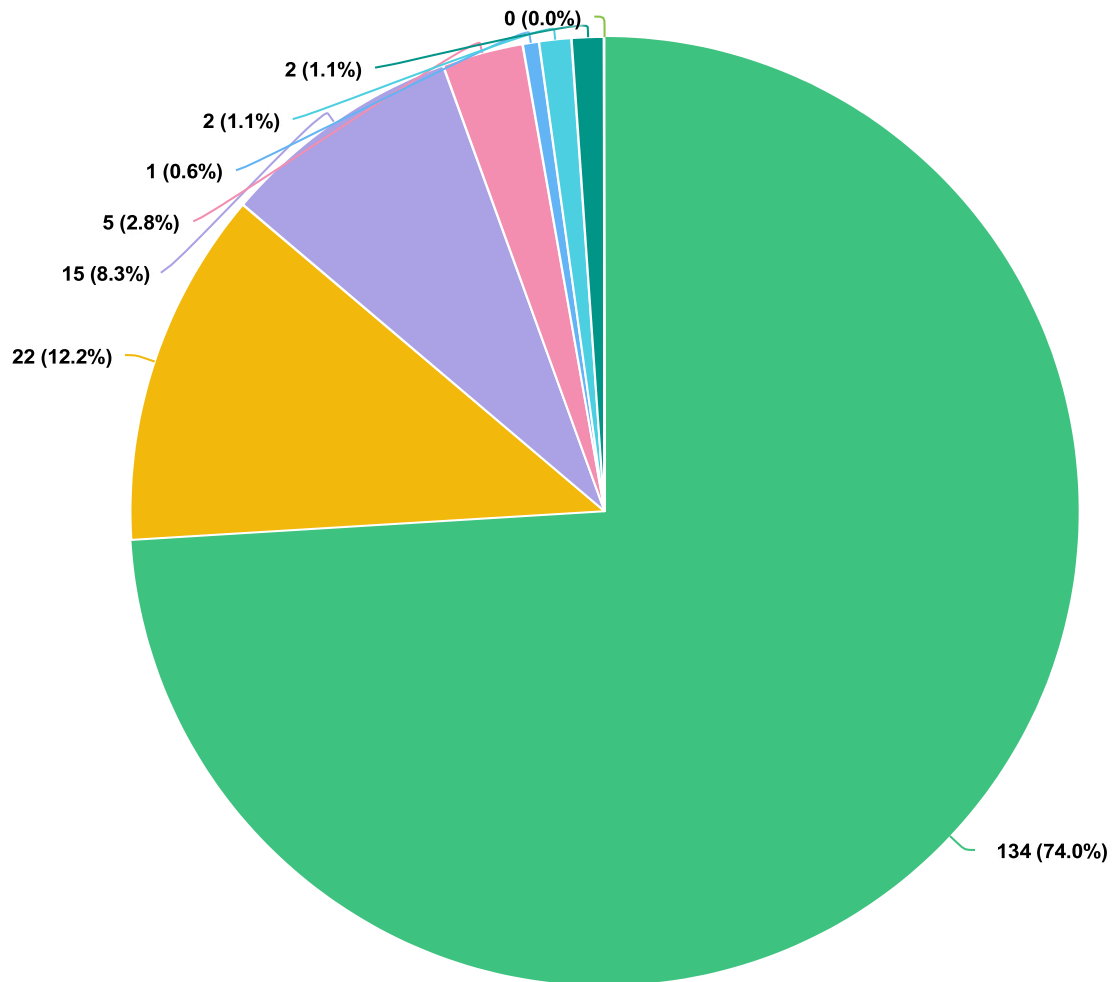
Question options

☒ Work in Torbay ☒ Live in Torbay ☐ Other, please say:

Optional question (182 response(s), 4 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q11 Where do you live?



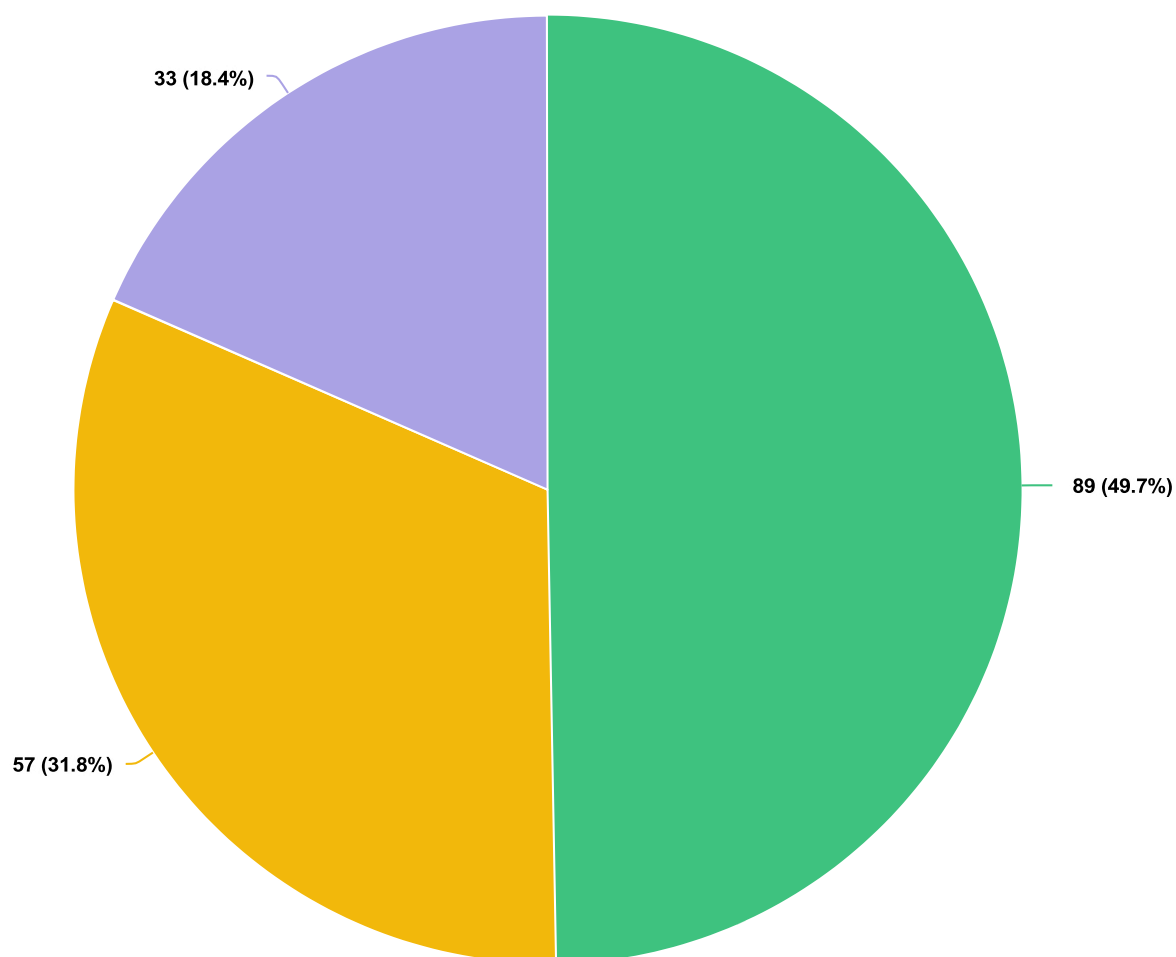
Question options

- Home owned outright, or with mortgage
- Private rented home
- Housing association home
- Living with family
- Living with friends
- Temporary accommodation
- Other, please say:
- Homeless

Optional question (180 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 Is your annual income, including any benefits or pension:



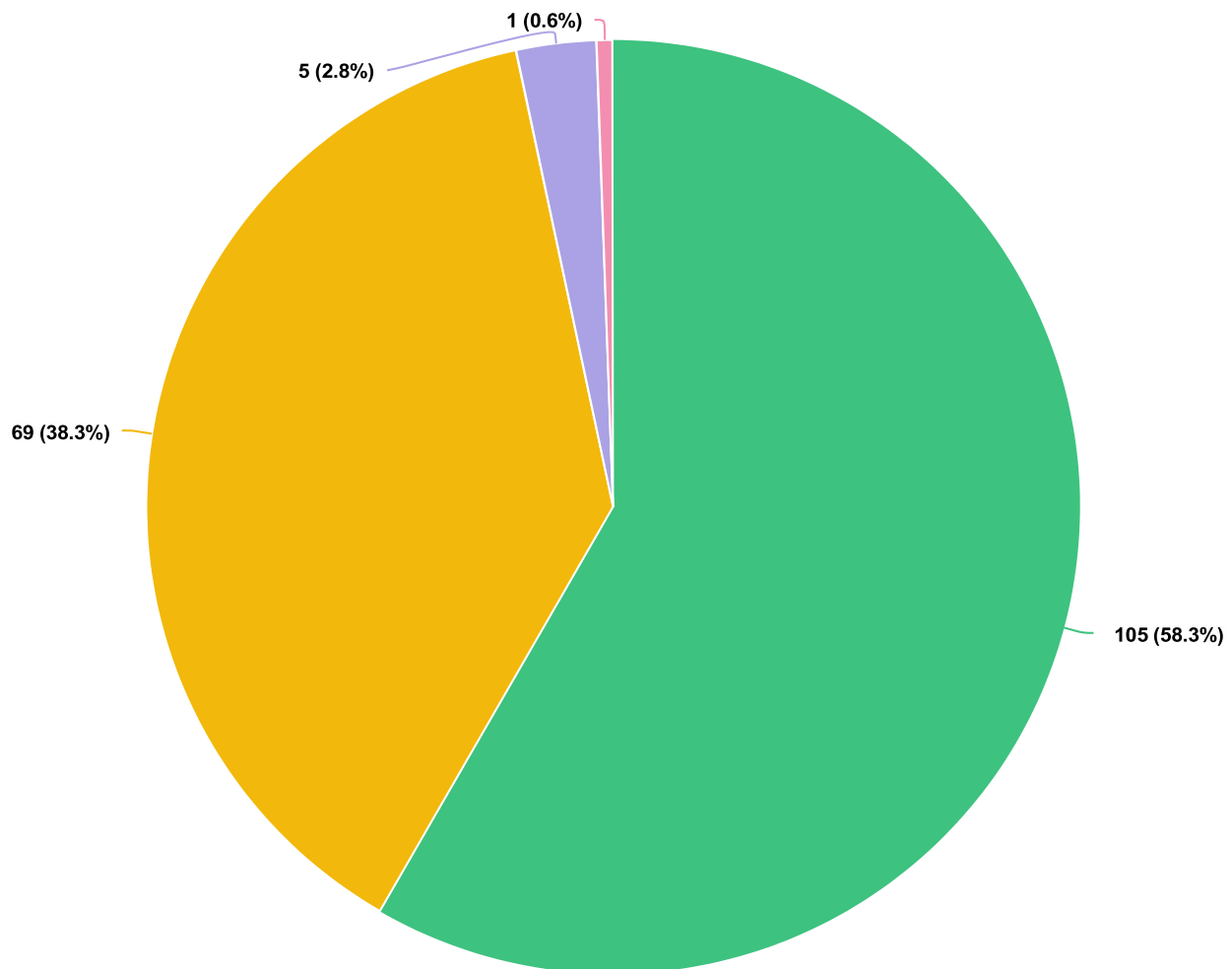
Question options

☒ Above £18,840 ☐ Below £18,840 ☐ Prefer not to say

Optional question (178 response(s), 8 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q13 What is your gender?

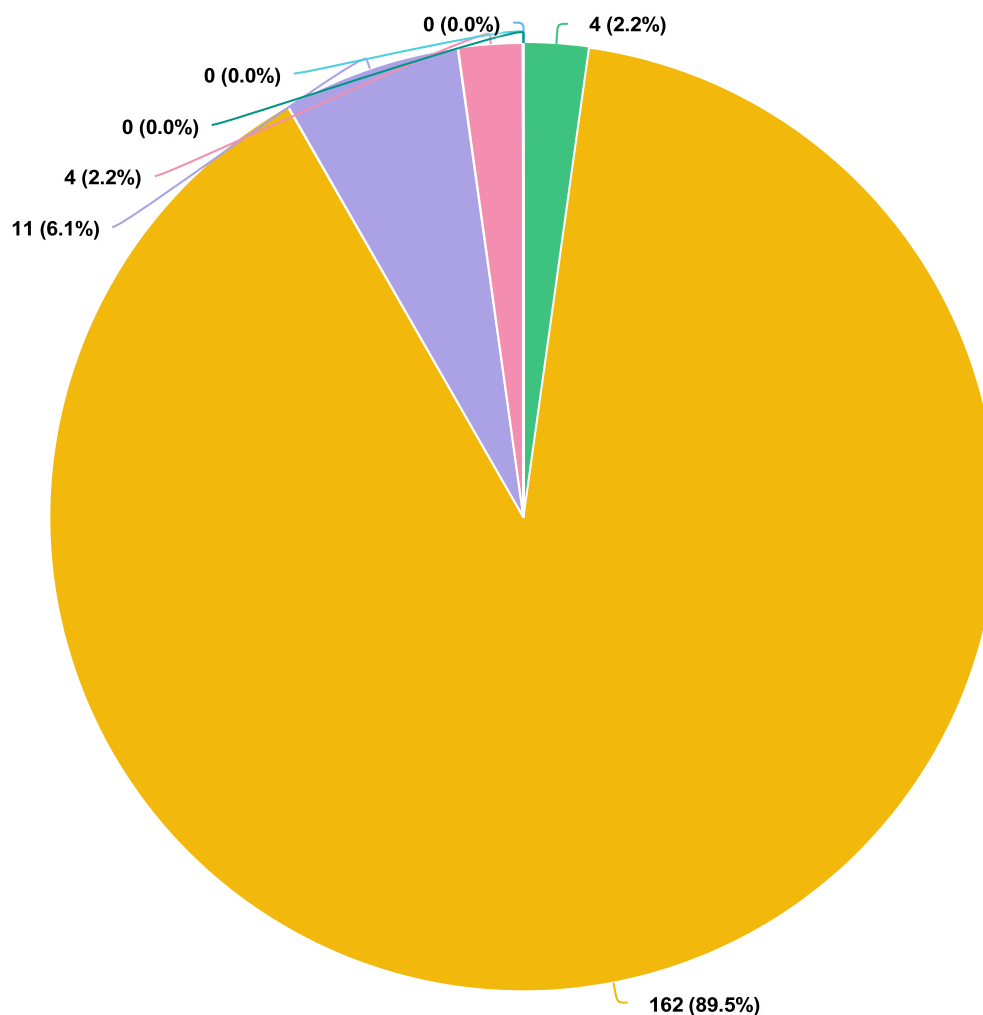


Question options

● Female ● Male ● Prefer not to say ● Other, please say:

Optional question (179 response(s), 7 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q14 How would you describe your ethnic origin?



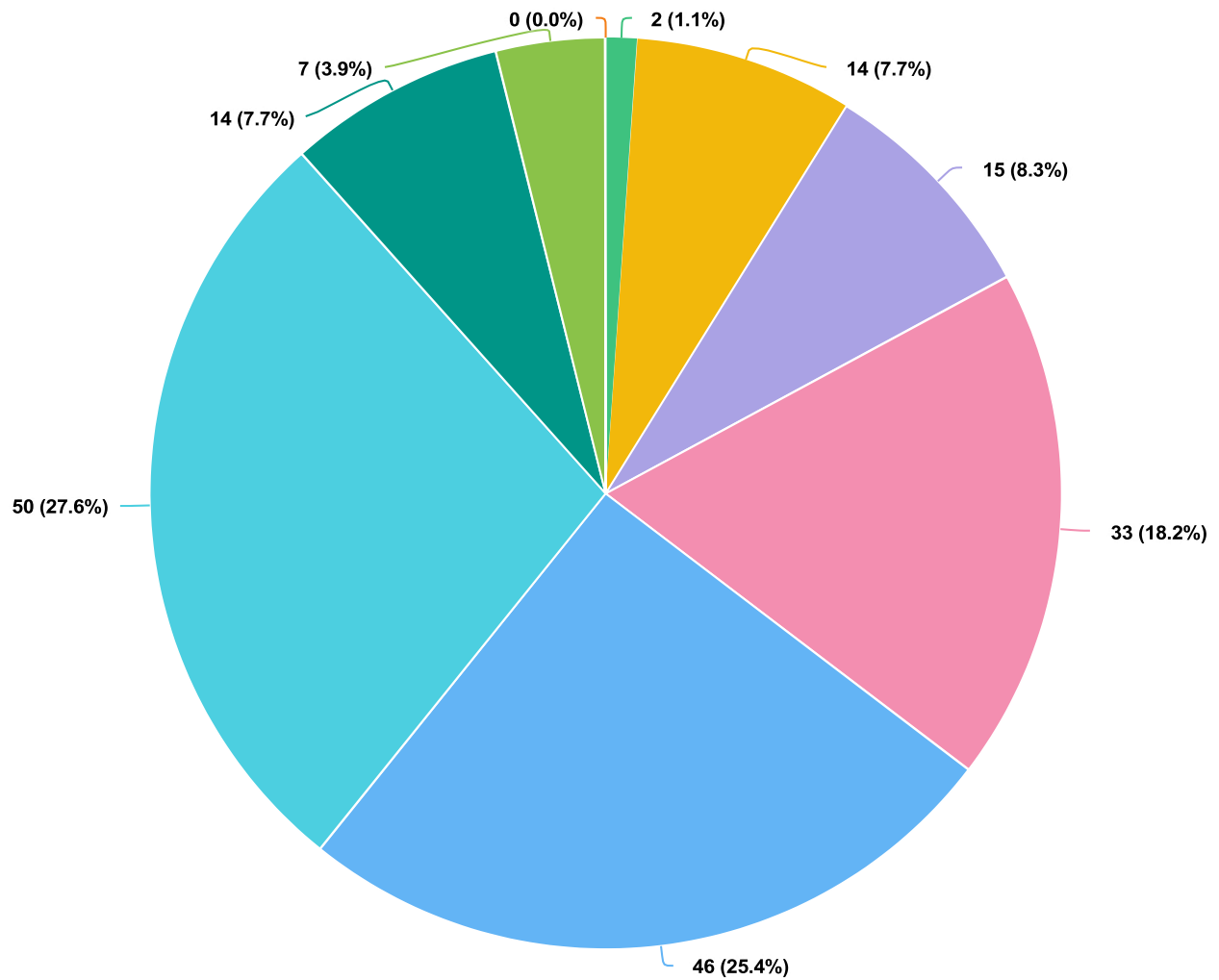
Question options

- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups ☐ White ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other, please say: ☐ Asian, or Asian British
☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ☐ Gypsy or Traveller

Optional question (180 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q15 To which age group do you belong?

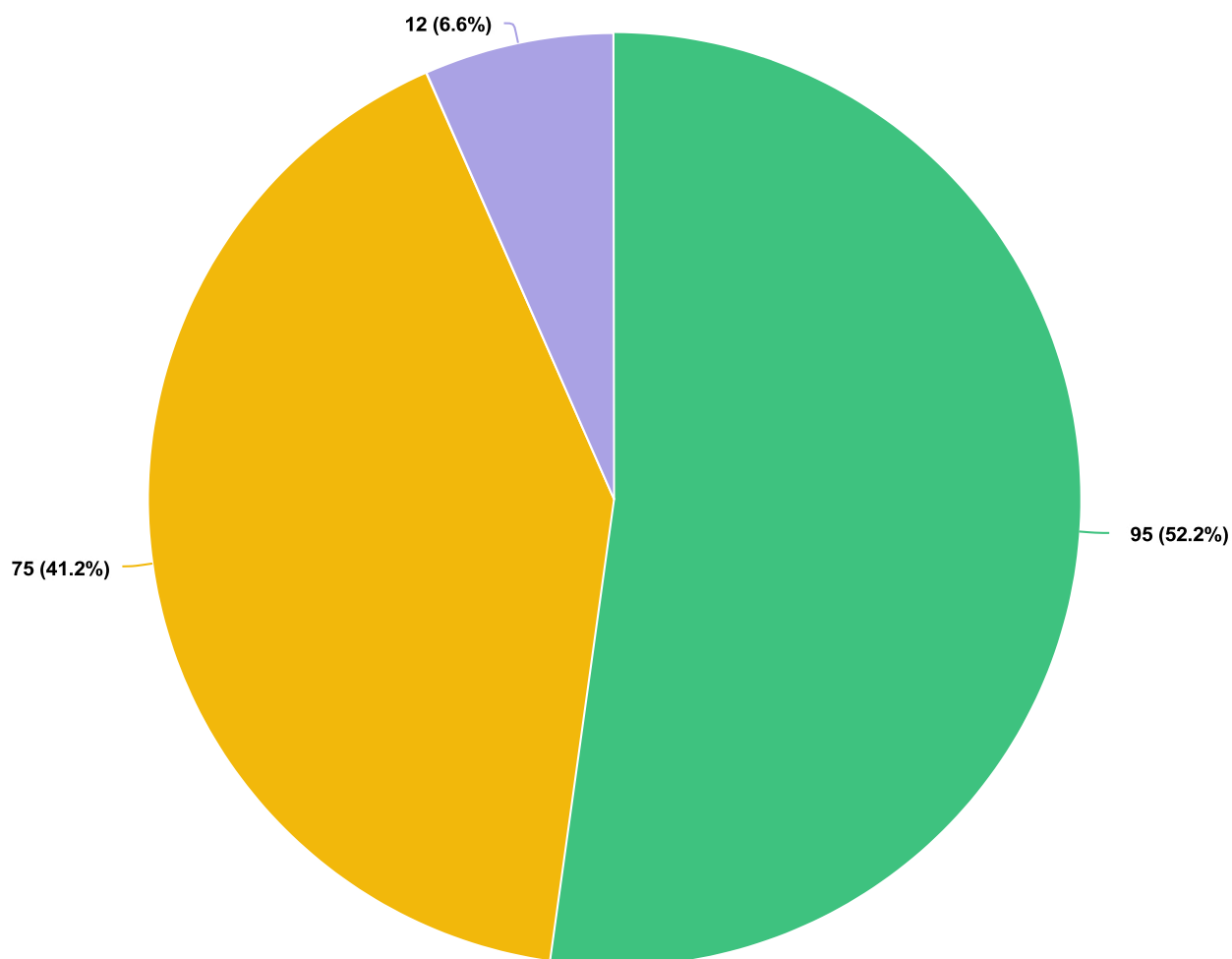


Question options

- 18 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65 to 74 Over 75 Prefer not to say Under 18

Optional question (180 response(s), 6 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q16 Do you, or anyone living with you, have a long-term illness, or condition?



Question options

☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Prefer not to say

Optional question (181 response(s), 5 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

2 Comments and suggestions

The comments and suggestions received were grouped by topic and can be categorised under the following themes:

Topic	Count	%
1 Develop on brownfield land, reduce the number of empty homes and curb the use of second homes	73	25%
2 Develop more affordable homes	31	11%
3 Homes should go to local households	29	10%
4 Preserve open countryside and green fields	28	10%
5 Prevent homelessness and address rough sleeping, particularly in town	23	8%
6 Help landlords and help tenants in private rented accommodation	23	8%
7 New homes require more infrastructure, like roads, NHS, schools, cycling, public transport etc	21	7%
8 Other: topics related to other Council functions	20	7%
9 Tackle conditions in the housing stock, both private and social	15	5%
10 Improve the design of new homes, including energy efficiency and parking	10	3%
Housing is unaffordable	8	3%
More eco and environmental measures, such as insulation, solar power etc	6	2%
Less luxury market homes and more for first time buyers	3	1%
More homes, including extra care for those with a disability	2	1%
Total	292	100%

Of these, around 57% were related to planning policy, such as policies on the open countryside, brownfield land and lack of infrastructure, with a further 7% related to other Council initiatives, such as tourism, waste collection etc. We will pass the comments to the relevant departments.

Officers have summarised a response for the most frequent topics and themes, where more than 10 responses were received:

1 Develop on brownfield land, reduce the number of empty homes and curb the use of second homes

Unfortunately, there isn't sufficient brownfield land across the area to provide all the homes Torbay needs. Additionally, due to site clearance and contamination issues, viability of these sites reduces the delivery of affordable homes. The current economic climate is making the situation worse.

Torbay Council currently charges 100% Council Tax on properties from the day the property becomes empty. This increases to 200% if the property remains empty for over two years, increasing to 400% should it remain empty for up to ten years. The Council

adopted an Empty Homes Policy in 2022 and is committed to bringing empty homes back into use to increase all of the available housing stock in the Bay.

To enable higher Council Tax levies on second homes would require changes to legislation. Torbay Council currently charges the maximum 100% Council Tax allowable for second homes. From April 2023, second homeowners will have to prove holiday lets are being rented out for a minimum of 70 days a year to access small business rates relief, where they meet the criteria.

2 Develop more affordable homes

It is the Torbay Local Plan that provides the Council's blueprint for housing distribution and the level of development, including affordable housing. It establishes the level and need for supporting infrastructure and sets out a raft of policies, proposals and actions to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the area.

Open market housing (in particular the contribution via affordable housing planning obligations) is the main route to securing the delivery of affordable housing. However, affordable housing can also be provided using government grants and the Council's assets, including land. The housing strategy proposes a mix of Homes England grant and local housing investment, such as Council land and assets, with a view to establishing affordable rents for Torbay residents on low incomes. Building more affordable homes is one of the Strategy's key priorities.

3 Homes should go to local households

Social housing is managed by registered providers and lettings are governed by the Housing Register (Devon Home Choice) Allocation Policy. All applications are assessed and placed in one of four priority bands, which is based on our assessment of a household's housing need, and whether or not they have a local connection.

At the end of each weekly advertising cycle, a list is produced of all qualifying bids. The list initially sorts applicants by their priority banding and then on how long they have been waiting. All appropriate checks are carried out by the registered provider that owns the stock.

4 Preserve open countryside and green fields

The Local Plan determines the level and need for development and sets out a raft of policies, proposals and actions to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the area. The Local Plan consultation has just concluded and following a review, the Council will update its housing supply policies.

The Local Plan housing growth scenario will affect poverty, inequalities, and the delivery of affordable housing. Broadly speaking, a high growth scenario will provide the most affordable housing and economic prosperity; but will come at the cost of its environmental impact. Torbay has internationally important biodiversity associated with the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Berry Head, and the Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The options will need to be assessed through a Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment (HRA), that will need to consider the in-combination effects of growth.

5 Prevent homelessness and address rough sleeping, particularly in town

Homelessness has a serious and harmful effect on those who experience it. No household should ever have to experience homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

took effect on 3 April 2018, placing new duties on councils to work with homeless families to prevent or relieve homelessness before a main homeless duty is accepted.

Our approach is to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, before individuals, or families lose their home. We are developing a separate homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that will be published during the life of this strategy. It will contain a lot more detail about how we intend to tackle homelessness and its causes.

For many people there will be several reasons they become homeless; for some there will be multiple, complex reasons. Our primary focus is upon helping households to remain in their own home, provided that it is safe and suitable for them to do so. There are a number of in-house services available to help households remain in their homes, including:

- financial and debt advice
 - work with landlords and lettings agents
 - mediation with family and friends, or landlords
 - partnership work to tackle harassment and domestic abuse
 - partnership work to deal with anti-social behaviour
- taking a trauma informed approach to supporting those with complex needs

6 Help landlords and help tenants in private rented accommodation

The housing conditions in the private rented sector are worse than for any other, so making sure that the quality and standard of the private rented sector is a priority for us. We also focus much of our work in this sector because tenants have little, or no control over getting remedial works carried out, so we use all the tools available to take action against poor standards.

In Torbay there is a large percentage of low-income households renting privately. A low-income household is defined as a household in receipt of one, or a number of benefits. In Torbay's private rented stock, 68% of households claim some sort of housing subsidy. This is significantly higher than national and regional averages. Legislation states that benefits are paid to the tenant, not direct to the landlord, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The cost of living crisis is making the situation worse, with the Housing Options Team receiving around 13,000 calls each year.

Our Enforcement Policy helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement that improve outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens. We work with private landlords to drive up standards, but will also take action against any landlords who do not comply with legislation, in line with our Policy.

Although there are many reasons for homelessness, last year, the most common reasons recorded locally were: the loss of a private rented home (34%), family and friends no longer willing, or able to accommodate (19%) and domestic abuse (12%).

7 New homes require more infrastructure, like roads, NHS, schools, cycling, public transport etc

It is the Torbay Local Plan that establishes the level and need for supporting infrastructure, which is considered alongside plans for new development. All existing Local Plan allocations are supported by policies that require specific types of infrastructure to be provided, whether that be roads, schools, community facilities etc.

All new dwellings, or commercial premises are subject to what is effectively a tax on new development called the Community Infrastructure Levy. This money is retained in the Council's budget for infrastructure projects in the Bay. It often goes unnoticed that increased capacity of schools, GP surgeries, new roads, community centres or sports facilities have been paid for as a direct result of housing development.

8 Other: topics related to other Council functions

A number of comments were received related to other Council initiatives, such as tourism, road works, waste collection etc. We will pass the comments to the relevant departments.

9 Tackle conditions in the housing stock, both private and social

Torbay Council does not own housing stock at scale. In the late 1980s, along with the 'Right to Buy' Torbay undertook a 'Large Scale Voluntary Transfer' (LSVT) as part of the Government's programme to transfer the ownership, management, and repair of public housing from local government to private contractors and landlords. Subsequently, a number of local authorities created private housing associations, now called 'registered providers'. In Torbay Riviera Housing was created, the stock is now owned by Sanctuary Housing.

It is the Regulator of Social Housing who undertakes the economic regulation of social housing providers, focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and will take action if these standards are breached, or if there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants.

If you rent your home from a social landlord, they're responsible for dealing with most repair problems. If you've reported repairs to your landlord and they haven't done anything, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman. Our advice would be to follow the registered provider's complaints process, however, over recent months we have received an increasing number of complaints from tenants in social housing requiring formal action to be undertaken by the Council.

10 Improve the design of new homes, including energy efficiency and parking

Housing design is one of the issues under consideration in the emerging Local Plan update. Aspiration 4 aims 'to conserve and enhance the richness and diversity of the built, historic, marine and natural environments, and 'to avoid mediocre design by the application of clear design standards, including the use of Torbay's Design Review Panel to maintain quality development that is well integrated in its surroundings and responds successfully to local character'.

Aspiration 5 aims 'to end the cycle of deprivation linked to substandard accommodation and resist inappropriate conversions and poor design where this may exacerbate disadvantage and deprivation'. Policy SHS aims 'to end the cycle of deprivation linked to substandard accommodation and resist inappropriate conversions and poor design where this may exacerbate disadvantage and deprivation.'

3 Amendments to the strategy

Generally, the comments received tend to, either echo Torbay's Council's commitment to our housing function and practice, for example 'reduce the number of empty homes', or they contravene our statutory duties, for example 'pay rent direct to landlord'. Sometimes it's simply not possible to achieve the suggestions as there are insufficient resources to do so. It might

therefore be beneficial to promote our housing duties and actions more widely as part of a communication campaign.

As a result of consultation with the public, partners and stakeholders we have taken on a number of comments and suggestions and have amended the Strategy accordingly. In summary they are:

- a. Clarify and better explain housing terms, such as 'housing support', geographic relief' and role of strategic partners
- b. Include the fact that affordable housing is key to attracting and retaining our workforce, supports the growth of our key employment sectors, such as tourism, fishing, hi-tech etc, reduces the levels of deprivation and meets the priorities in our Economic Growth Strategy
- c. Reinforce a partner approach and that we are open to all methods of affordable housing delivery and that it is the Local Plan that dictates overall housing targets, as well as affordable homes
- d. Update the number of affordable homes required over the next seven years to ensure all of our strategies reflect the same target. This is the function of the Local Plan, and, until it is updated, we must adopt the Government's 'standard method' calculation for the delivery of homes that places a requirement on Torbay to build 600 dwellings a year, plus a 20% (120) imposed 'buffer', due to the under-delivery of housing over the previous years. However, the Government is now looking at reducing its compulsory housebuilding targets, which will also be mentioned
- e. Ensure we include our partners in the voluntary sector to help us improve our support offer and take the opportunity to work closer to better understand how they can assist and support our work, as well as listen to what is happening at a local level

Conclusion

The refreshed strategy describes how the Council will continue to expand our innovative approach to deliver solutions to meet the wide variety of housing need in our communities. It has been updated in light of the consultation and where appropriate we have taken on board comments to prioritise the work we do.

Overall, it does look like the Strategy reflects the public mood and ambition, for example a demand for affordable homes for local people and increased energy efficiency in the Bay. As it is the Local Plan that dictates the delivery of affordable homes; we will feed consultation results into the Local Plan Update, which ran alongside the Strategy consultation.

Ref	Housing Strategy Project Plan: Year one 2023/24 (reported quarterly in July 23, Oct 23, Jan 24 , April 24)	
1	Priority 1: Improving housing supply	Lead
1.1	Enable 34 units of sheltered housing with care for older people, deliver 72 units of extra care at Tor Marine, 12 units for those with learning disabilities and autism and 6 units of supported living accommodation for people with enduring mental ill health by 2023/24 Q4 (based on the Adult Social Care Strategic Housing Requirements 2022)	AR
1.2	Provide a flexible approach to allow access to a mixed economy of 101 units of varying types of accommodation, to improve the housing outcomes for care experienced leavers by 2023/24 Q4 (based on Temporary Accommodation Care Experienced Young People Accommodation and Sufficiency Plan 2022)	BT
1.3	Work in partnership with organisations such as the NHS, Environment Agency, Natural England, Primary Care Trust, transport companies Homes England and other local authorities to assemble land for development by 2023/24 Q4	AD, DE
1.4	Purchase 36 self-contained, temporary accommodation for homeless households by 2023/24 Q1	TH
1.5	Deliver the Empty Homes Policy action plan to reduce the number of empty homes, by working with property owners and targeting those empty for over 2 years	TH
1.6	Work through the Housing Delivery Group to proactively address stalled sites, use compulsory purchase orders to buy brownfield sites at realistic prices, review exception sites in the Local Plan and regularly review the potential for 'off the shelf' purchases 2023/24 Q4	DE
1.7	Deliver Torbay Council's 'Right-Sizing Project' via Devon Home Choice to free up 16 larger family homes a year	TH
1.8	Review Council and social housing provider assets and land ownership, including car parks and other land appropriate for acquisition and link into the town centre masterplan and urban regeneration ambitions by 2023/24 Q3	DE
1.9	Establish formal strategic partnerships with registered providers on affordable housing sites to enable affordable and first time buyer homes by 2023/24 Q4	DE
1.10	Work with 'build for rent' developers to investigate a shared housing project within the Town Centre Master and Waterside Development Plans by 2023/24 Q2	DE, AD
1.11	Conduct an external assessment of potential residential development in the town centres, focussing on Council assets, viability, supply chain etc by 2023/24 Q4	AD, DE
2	Priority 2: Improving housing conditions	
2.1	Produce and deliver a private rented and social sector improvement plan to tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions, proactively target non-compliant landlords and take appropriate action where standards are not being met. Include improvement statistics and targets	TH
2.2	Develop business plan and seek funding for loans scheme to target those most in need to help improve energy efficiency, tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions for 2023/24 Q3	TH, DE
2.3	Develop and implement a robust Housing Assistance Policy to help residents remain independent at home in line with changing needs and legislative requirements. By 2023/24 Q2	TH
3	Priority 3: Improving housing support	
3.1	Undertake appropriate lobbying to increase the Local Housing Allowance rates to meet local need 2023/24 Q3	TH

3.2	Continue to improve and implement the Housing Options Service Improvement Plan, to make sure that we give residents high quality, accessible advice when they need it. (See action plan for key milestones)	TH
3.3	Work with members, partners and clients to develop a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that is fit for purpose and meets statutory and legislative requirements. By 2023/24 Q4	TH
3.4	Implement the domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy and associated action plan with an emphasis on moving victims to safe and secure accommodation and preventing homelessness. (See action plan for key milestones)	TH
3.5	Work with the Department of Works and Pensions and the community and voluntary sector to improve options for employment, education and training for people who have experienced homelessness	TH, AD
3.6	Formalise our Rent Guarantor Scheme for care experienced young people, offering six months rent in advance and deposit by 2023/24 Q2	BT
3.7	Deliver a revised homeless hostel provision plan for the Leonard Stocks Centre, with the right level of support. See delivery plan for key milestones	TH
3.8	Develop a funding bid for the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP) from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for 23/24 Q2	TH
3.9	Undertake a cost benefit assessment and develop a business plan for people who require accommodation, but are not eligible under the Care Act (2014), (Housing Plus) to better understand potential cost savings by 2024/25 Q1	AR, TH

Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024 – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report to Cabinet on 23 February 2023

Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 9 February 2023 to consider the final draft Housing Strategy and Project Plan. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Darling, introduced the revised Draft Housing Strategy, which had been updated following consultation, and the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024. Members asked the following questions which were answered by the officers in attendance and the Leader of the Council:
 - What action was being taken to address shops which had been empty for a long period of time.
 - How much social housing does Torbay need compared to the rest of the country.
 - Preston Down Road had gone out to tender for a registered social provider, why had this information not been shared with Councillors. Members requested information on the tender for Preston Down Road to be circulated to all Councillors after the meeting.
 - If a separate entrance was not available to premises above shops would that make it more difficult to lease those spaces for housing.
 - What action was being taken to ensure that landlords maintain their properties to an acceptable standard to prevent tenants having to move out of their existing properties.
 - A number of complaints had been received from members of the public relating to poor housing conditions e.g. damp and repairs how were these reported and what action could the Council take to support tenants.
 - How do we identify homeless residents and how were they registered as homeless.
 - It can be difficult for homeless people to access housing due to waiting to receive benefits what support was available to help them.
 - Who was responsible for dealing with antisocial behaviour outside flats and what could be done to support residents facing issues with antisocial behaviour.
 - The report refers to challenges of lack of local builders in the Bay, what was meant by this. Officers were requested to clarify this after the meeting.
 - What was affordable rent compared to social rent.

- Was the Council taking enough enforcement action to improve the quality of homes.
 - Had the population figures for Torbay been updated following publication of the latest census.
 - Were the figures for the number of affordable homes to be delivered realistic.
2. The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both in writing and orally and formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.
3. That the Cabinet be recommended:

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 1 that the Torbay Housing Strategy 2023-2030, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved, subject to the latest population figures being checked against the latest census data; and**
- 2 subject to 1 above, the Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024, subject to:**
 - **a realistic and attainable target for delivery of the number of affordable homes to be delivered each year; and**
 - **to include targets to deliver a private rented sector improvement plan to tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions, proactively target non-compliant landlords by and take appropriate action where standards are not being met (target 2.1) and include actions and targets for improving housing conditions in social rented housing.**

Recommendation to Overview and Scrutiny Board (Cabinet to note):

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board monitors the delivery of the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023/2024 as part of their Work Programme for 2023/2024.

Record of Decisions

Torbay Housing Strategy

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 23 February 2023.

Decision

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. that the Torbay Housing Strategy 2023-2030, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved; and
2. subject to 1. above, the Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024, with any minor amendments to the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024 being made by the Director of Pride in Place in consultation with Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing.

Reason for the Decision

The current Housing Strategy runs to April 2025, it was adopted prior to the Council declaring a Housing and Climate emergency in 2021, and before the Covid19 Pandemic in 2020. As a result the Council has refreshed the aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy accordingly. The refreshed Housing Strategy sets out what the Council, and its partners, will be doing to improve the housing situation for Torbay's current and future residents.

Implementation

The recommendations of the Cabinet will be considered at the Council meeting on 7 March 2023.

Information

The Housing Strategy (Policy Framework document) is the over-arching strategic document that pulls together all aspects of the Council's strategic housing function. The Housing Strategy sets out the approach the Council will take with all of its partners to work towards the vision set out in the Strategy. The priorities reflect the broad range of work that the Council and its partners do to meet local housing need, including developing affordable housing, maintaining housing standards, and helping people to stay independent in their own homes, whilst preventing homelessness. Within each theme, key aims of the Council have been identified, which are considered to directly contribute to the overall sense of community, health and wellbeing in the Bay.

At the meeting, Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None.

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

28 February 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Meeting: Cabinet/Council

Date: 23 February 2023/7 March 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Carter, Cabinet Member for Community and Customer Services, Christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Tara Harris, Divisional Director of Customer and Corporate Services, Tara.harris@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2023 to 2023.
- 1.2 The Strategy has been updated following a 6 week public consultation on the draft Strategy which took place during October and November 2022, as approved by Cabinet on 18th October 2022.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by creating safe spaces, supporting victims, and addressing the behaviours of those causing harm, so that our vulnerable residents and their children can thrive.

- 2.2 The reasons for the decision are that the previous Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy is due to end early in 2023. The new Strategy has been developed following a strategic review of the system response in 2021, and with the approval of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) that the new strategy would continue to address both domestic abuse and sexual violence, however with an increased focus on sexual violence.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

That the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Background Documents

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy ends in March 2023. In preparation a strategic review of the domestic abuse response in Torbay was undertaken in 2021. The review incorporated a review of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (DAA21) and a lived experience listening exercise. All the recommendations have been incorporated into the findings to inform the direction and focus of the new Strategy.
- 1.2 The findings from the Call to Action sexual violence project that Torbay Council participated in during 2021 (with people with lived experience of sexual violence, Devon, Plymouth, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon CCG and the Innovation Unit); have been used to inform the focus and direction for sexual violence. In addition data about sexual violence services and demand has been gathered to inform a local position statement on sexual violence in Torbay.
- 1.3 A theory of change was devised following analysis of all the review findings, which has informed what change needs to happen, what outcomes have been identified and how we deliver them. This revealed a commonality of themes between both domestic abuse and sexual violence that are a focus for the strategy. A small number of themes specific to domestic or sexual violence are also included.
- 1.4 The Strategy focuses on lived experience, prevention, identification, disruption, evidence and understanding; aiming to:
 - a) Elevate responses to sexual violence to achieve parity with domestic violence over the lifetime of the Strategy
 - b) Ensure that all victims disclosing Domestic Abuse and/or Sexual Violence feel that they are believed
 - c) Hold those who harm accountable and not their victims
 - d) Change the narrative and address myths and victim blaming language and practice
 - e) Embed trauma informed practice and improve understanding of how trauma frames victims' responses
 - f) Develop a robust evidence base and consistent monitoring
 - g) Broaden knowledge and understanding of what constitutes domestic and sexual violence and abuse both in the workforce and across the general public, framed in the context of relationships.

1.5 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence needs to be considered as a whole system response across the life course. There is a risk that separating out various themes can lead to fragmentation and poor oversight of the overall strategic response. However, this is necessary as some areas of activity fit more appropriately with, for example, children's safeguarding. It will be the responsibility of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group to ensure connectivity and line of sight between the main Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and related strategies or workstreams so that everything is aligned to the overall strategic direction. Changes to direction or focus resulting from legislative or policy changes will be incorporated into reviews of the strategy which will take place at regular intervals.

1.6 The Strategy has been updated to incorporate feedback from the public consultation, as outlined in 5 below.

1.7 The Delivery Plan that will sit below this Strategy will necessarily be a multi-agency, partnership document. In keeping with the Strategy principles it will be co-produced with people with lived experience as well as services and practitioners working with people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence. For this reason, the Delivery Plan is not yet in place however will be overseen by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 An alternative option would be to do nothing. However this was discounted as the current policy was set to expire this year and would not take account of the information gathered from the review and the high profile nature of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay.
- 2.2 An option of having two individual strategies for domestic violence and abuse, and sexual violence was discounted by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) as this would fragment the strategic response, create areas of overlap and duplication and ineffective use of resources.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Strategy sits above the statutory Safe Accommodation Strategy that is required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and which was approved by Cabinet on 14 December 2021.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 The draft Strategy was published for public consultation between 19 October 2022 and 30th November 2022. It was published on the Council's website and a link to the consultation was added to the Torbay Community Safety Partnership Are You OK website, which serves as a repository and resource for public information on domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
- 5.2 The draft Strategy and link to the consultation page was widely circulated by email to partner agencies and stakeholders, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon and Cornwall Police, NHS Devon, internal Council stakeholders, the Standing Tall Community and Voluntary Sector Partnership, and commissioned and non-commissioned provider services and charities including the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Devon Rape Crisis. The consultation was also promoted via social media and during the latter part of the consultation period, promotion was linked to the annual international 16 Days of Action campaign which raises awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 5.3 There were 50 responses to the survey. The page was visited 397 times during the consultation period and related documents on the page were downloaded 170 times. The survey itself was viewed 159 times. Responses to the survey show that:
- 92.0% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the areas for change identified in the draft strategy.
 - 88.0% either agree or strongly agree with the outcomes we want to achieve.
 - 84.0% either agree or strongly agree with the five key activities we will do to deliver the outcomes.
 - 86.0% either agree or strongly agree with the principles we will work to.
 - Most respondents to the survey live in Torbay (70.0%). The highest proportion of respondents live in Torquay (32.0%)
 - 72.0% of respondents were female.
 - The majority of respondents are aged between 35 and 64 (84.0%). There were no responses from people aged under 25.
 - 82.0% of respondents did not consider themselves to be disabled in any way.
- 5.4 The draft Strategy was also presented to Overview and Scrutiny Board on 9th November 2022 and provoked interest and discussion. The Board acknowledged that training was provided to Council staff and Councillors on safeguarding, bystander and domestic abuse but felt that more could be done to challenge our partners and our communities to encourage everyone to report any areas of concern. The Board unanimously approved that Cabinet be recommended to support the draft Strategy, subject to the inclusion of a glossary of terms and acronyms, which has now been added. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board is set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

5.5 The demographic profile of the consultation responses revealed an absence of responses from people aged 16 to 25. To address this, steps are being taken to ensure involvement of this age group in co-producing the Strategy Delivery Plan, which will set out the actions and workstreams to delivering the Strategy outcomes.

5.6 The main themes from the survey feedback concerned:

- More emphasis required on addressing impacts on children and taking a whole family approach
- Education for children and young people on healthy relationships
- The need for a more systemic approach
- Community and Voluntary Sector is part of the solution
- Family court
- How the outcomes will be achieved

5.7 The Strategy has been updated to include taking a whole family approach, learning and education, challenging social norms, using existing resources more effectively, collaboration, and maximising funding opportunities to develop local support for those experiencing sexual violence; as fundamental to the approach to achieve culture change and parity for those experiencing sexual violence in Torbay.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 Not applicable

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 Not applicable

8. Associated Risks

8.1 Domestic abuse and sexual violence rates are disproportionately high in Torbay and can have life-changing effects for those directly and indirectly victimised, it has been and continues to be a strategic priority for these reasons. An effective response can only come from coordinated efforts across the system, inclusive of our communities and the voluntary sector. Not having a strategy that unites, challenges and drives these efforts risks ineffective and inadequate responses, which ultimately would leave people at heightened risk, the perpetuation of all the harms associated which are significant and in worse case scenarios deaths.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	DA and SV are generally under-reported. Prevalence across older people is recognised but requires more insight and response. Younger people form part of a priority group as a preventative measure to stop any abuse from happening, but also to prevent chances of repeat victimisation and negative outcomes across the lifecycle.		
People with caring Responsibilities			Impact is neutral (although may link to other groups)
People with a disability	Having a disability is a known risk factor associated with being vulnerable to DA and or SV		
Women or men	Women are more likely to experience DA and or SV than men. Although men are also victims too.		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	The strategy seeks to be more responsive to Torbay's diversity, in doing so will seek to ensure that people can identify with service responses and resources available		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			Neutral

People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Services offers have historically been less visible and responsive to LGBTQ community – Strategy seeks to address		
People who are transgendered	Services offers have historically been less visible and responsive to LGBTQ community – Strategy seeks to address		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			Neutral
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Pregnancy is an identified risk factor for occurrence of DVA		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	DA and SV cuts across socio-economic boundaries, although there is a correlation with Torbay's more deprived areas (in terms of reporting)		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Domestic Abuse and sexual violence are determinants of a range of social, economic, mental and physical ill's – this strategy contributes very directly to promoting the general health of Torbay, including sexual health.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 11.1 None from the local perspective. However continuing and worsening economic hardship in our communities is expected to result in increased incidences of domestic violence and abuse.

Breaking the Chain Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

2023 – 2030



Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction	4
Legal Framework and Definitions.....	6
Legal Framework.....	6
Regional and Local Strategies.....	7
Definitions	7
Abbreviations and terms used in this document	8
Data on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	10
National Data.....	10
Torbay Domestic Abuse Headlines	11
Torbay Sexual Violence Data Headlines	11
Developing our strategy	12
Scope of the Strategy.....	14
Out of scope.....	14
What people have told us.....	15
Summary of our Findings	18
What needs to change	20
Our Strategy	21
Our Principles	22
What We Want to Achieve	22
Short term outcomes	22
Medium term outcomes	22
Long term outcomes.....	23
Delivering the outcomes	23
Activity 1- Embed lived experience and co-production	24
Activity 2 - Prevent victimisation and harmful behaviours.....	25
Activity 3 – Identify victimisation and harmful behaviours.....	25
Activity 4 - Disrupt harmful behaviour	25
Activity 5 - Develop data and understanding	26
Monitoring and Oversight	26
Review	26

Warning - this document contains references and quotes that may be triggering for some people.

Foreword

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence have devastating impacts for individuals, families and communities, which is why this Strategy is so important to the Council and our numerous partners committing to breaking the chain.

There has been significant progress throughout the delivery of the previous Strategy, which has put Torbay in a much stronger position to be even more ambitious in tackling these massive issues. We are pleased to adopt a Strategy that is and needs to be ambitious, committed to long term change and absolutely focussed on responding to people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence. What sets this approach aside is how it has been developed with people sharing their lived experience – of their trauma, aspirations, things that have helped and where they have felt let down. These stories are the motivation and insight that will drive action forward and help the right responses to be delivered at the right time in the right way.

There can be no hiding from the fact that the prevalence of and response to sexual violence remains unacceptable, a national problem. It is necessary that this Strategy recognise this fact and address it as a priority, putting into purposeful use the Devon-wide sexual violence Call to Action, which again was informed by people with lived experience.

This Strategy aims to be responsive to all people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence and challenge all those who cause harm, but in doing so we recognise the disproportionate experience of women and girls as victims of male behaviour. Torbay will not shy away from bold conversations where they need to be had, or innovation where needed.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all the people who have taken their time to relay their experiences, no matter how difficult, to help develop this Strategy and improve our response for others now and in the future. We shall not stop listening, learning and striving for better – this Strategy is our commitment to that.

Councillor Christine Carter, Cabinet Member for Equality & Diversity and Corporate and Community Services

Introduction

“it definitely started off completely mental, not physical, but it was just literally putting me down all the time. Keeping me in my place. Making sure I was where I was supposed to be”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

Since our last Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy, which was launched in 2018, there have been a number of significant events and policy changes which have brought the emotive subjects of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and sexual violence (SV) to the forefront of our attention.

Firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic led to an almost overnight change in the way front line domestic abuse and sexual violence services were delivered. Virtual (online) support, which had previously been unthinkable, became the norm. Practitioners and support workers had to develop skills in using unfamiliar technology to ensure they could still see clients face to face and keep them safe. Forensic services for victims of sexual violence had to find ways to continue to safely provide forensic examinations whilst keeping victims and their staff protected from the virus. Strategic partnerships between local authority domestic abuse and sexual violence commissioners, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall (OPCC) health colleagues in Devon and Cornwall Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as Devon and Cornwall Police, became stronger and more robust. New relationships were forged as together we worked through the pandemic to listen to and learn from our services and communities to ensure victims and survivors of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence were able to access and receive support.

In 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act came into force, and amongst a range of measures - for the first time - a statutory duty was placed upon local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic violence living in what is defined as "safe accommodation" (such as a refuge). Importantly, the Act provides for children to be recognised as victims of domestic violence in their own right.

The same year brought the terrible crimes of sexual violence and murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa, and closer to home of Bobbi-Anne McCleod in Plymouth; and the advent of the "Everyone's Invited" campaign. Ofsted carried out a themed inspection of sexual harassment and abuse in schools. The Home Office produced its End to End Rape Review. Torbay undertook a Multi-Agency Case Audit of harmful sexual behaviour across Torbay.

Torbay's Partnership commitment to addressing DVA and SV has remained steadfast throughout the events and change of this period, with much progress being made in developing and expanding our response. Some key activities have included:

- Expanding the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advocate roles, including within Torbay hospital, sexual health services and for the LGBTQ community
- Specialist roles within Children's Services

- IRIS pilot established sensitive clinical enquiry enabling identification of domestic abuse and sexual violence in primary care
- White Ribbon re-accreditation
- Standing Tall DASV CVS Partnership developed and delivering support within the community
- Numerous training opportunities, webinars and awareness campaigns delivered
- Meeting statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Part of the NHS England Peninsula Sexual Violence Trauma Pathfinder with Peninsula Authorities, NHS Devon and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Torbay Council has procured a new Alliance of services that will work together - comprising the domestic abuse service, homeless hostel and adults' drug and alcohol services. These services, which go live in 2023, will work collaboratively with the Council as equal partners to provide trauma informed, integrated and holistic support for people experiencing a range of challenges in their lives. Instead of having to move around between different services and organisations, people can engage with one service that will work with them to address the underlying causes of their issues and support people in the way that best works for them.

"We need services to talk and listen to us rather than talk at us"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Our understanding of the issues around domestic violence and the partnerships in which we work have matured considerably since the last Strategy was written. Sadly however, the same cannot be said of sexual violence. Sexual violence remains a taboo subject for general discussion, cloaked in discomfort and shrouded in prejudicial myths that are systemically prevalent. We have found there is an inadequacy of support for victims of sexual violence and assault, particularly if a criminal justice response is not wanted or is not successful. The rates for successful prosecution are low nationally and regionally.

In this Strategy we aim to elevate the issue of sexual violence and our systemic response to it so that it becomes equal to that of domestic violence. That is not to say that we will not continue to address and improve our response to domestic violence; instead that we approach this work in the knowledge that those experiencing sexual violence in Torbay receive limited support, unequal to the support received by those who experience domestic violence and abuse.

"It's a cultural thing. As soon as you say: 'I've been in a domestic violence relationship.' 'What did you do to deserve it? Or what did you do to annoy them' as if that makes it all okay"

To aid understanding and avoid stigmatisation we look to frame our conversations and language around relationships as this is the enduring context of most domestic abuse and sexual violence. We fully acknowledge that DVA & SV is perpetrated against women and girls and is rooted in gender based patriarchal, misogynistic, historic, and cultural norms. However, we want to make our response as inclusive as possible in consideration of the broader nuances of violence and abuse within relationships and in keeping with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition of DVA, as well as gender identity and sexual orientation. As Torbay works to become a more trauma informed Council, we want to consider the impacts of trauma not only on victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, but also on those who are causing these harms; whilst still holding them fully accountable for their actions.

This Strategy is aligned to the **Council Fit for the Future** and **Thriving People** objectives set out in Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan, working in partnership to promote community resilience, promote good mental and physical health, and protect our children and young people.

Legal Framework and Definitions

“...I didn't see that I was in an abusive relationship because it wasn't physical”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

Legal Framework

The list below sets out the key legislation, national policies and strategies relating to domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence:

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021

End to End Rape Review 2021

Crown Prosecution Service Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Strategy (RASSO) 2020

The Victims Code (2020)

Victim's Bill 2022

Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 - Serious Violence Duty

Serious Crime Act 2015

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

The Care Act 2014

The Children Act 1989

Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls Final inspection report -Her

Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (September 2021)

Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations - Home Office (March 2022)

“A Patchwork of Provision– How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales” - Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office (November 2022)

Regional and Local Strategies

The following regional and local strategies are relevant:

Torbay Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 to 2024

Devon Clinical Commissioning Group Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence GP Policy

Devon & Cornwall Police Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan 2022/2023

Definitions

The World Health Organisation defines **sexual violence** as:

“Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work.”

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines **domestic violence and abuse** as follows:

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;
- psychological, emotional, or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or
- obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act: A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

Abbreviations and terms used in this document

Bystander Training/Approach	For the purposes of this document this refers to active bystander training in the community, whereby a person observes abusive or disrespectful behaviour, knows it is wrong and intervenes safely to prevent the situation escalating or to disrupt the situation.
Coercive Control	An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse carried out by the abuser that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim in the context of people in or who have been in an intimate relationship.
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (DAA21)	Legislation enacted in 2022 that created a new definition of domestic abuse, defined children as victims in their own right, and created a statutory requirement upon Tier 1 (county/unitary) Local Authorities to develop a Safe Accommodation Strategy overseen by an accountable Local Partnership Board.
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Operational Group (DASVOG)	Multi agency group comprising representatives from Torbay Council community safety and children's services, housing, domestic abuse services, sexual violence services, Devon and Cornwall Police, MARAC (as below), Health, community, and voluntary sector organisations. This operational group works on activities as directed by the DASVEG.
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG)	Multi agency group comprising senior managers from Torbay Council community safety and children's services, housing, domestic abuse services, sexual violence services, Devon and Cornwall Police, MARAC (as below), Health and community and voluntary sector organisations. This strategic group is responsible for the delivery of the statutory duties set out in the Domestic Abuse Act, takes the role of the local domestic abuse partnership board, and drives the activities needed to implement the DASV strategy
DA Champions	People who have undertaken Domestic Abuse Champions Training run by the organisation Reduce the Risk. Champions act as an access point in their workplace to provide guidance on domestic violence and signpost to appropriate services.
DVA/DA	Domestic Violence and Abuse – as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 above.
Health and Wellbeing Board	A partnership between the Local Authority and NHS overseeing the plans to improve the health and wellbeing needs of the local population.
Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)	IDVAs are specially trained to work with the highest risk cases to address the safety of victims and their children within a multi- agency framework, acting as the victim's primary point of contact. Their tasks include risk assessment, safety planning and implementing actions from the MARAC (see below).
Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA)	ISVAs provide advocacy and support to victims and survivors of recent and non-recent rape, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner separately commission them.
Lived Experience	Personal knowledge of someone who has direct experience of domestic violence or abuse and/or sexual violence.

Multi –Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	The Domestic Violence MARAC is a meeting where a range of agencies discuss the risk of future harm to people experiencing domestic abuse and draw up plans to help manage that risk
NHS Devon	A partnership of health and social care organisations working together with local communities across Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay to improve people's health, wellbeing, and care.
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall (OPCC)	The Police and Crime Commissioner is an elected representative who makes sure that local police meet the needs of the community.
Person displaying harmful behaviour/person causing harm	These terms are what we prefer to use to describe those perpetrating DVA or SV – otherwise known as perpetrators
Safe Accommodation Strategy	The Strategy required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which sets out how victim and survivors of domestic abuse will be supported in safe accommodation (such as refuge or safe houses
Safety Planning	A personal safety plan is a way for a person experiencing domestic violence or abuse to protect themselves and their children in the event of future abuse
Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)	Provides specialist medical and forensic services for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted in a safe, private, and comfortable environment
Sexual Assault	Sexual assault is any act of physical, psychological, and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts
Sexual Violence (SV)	Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting
Torbay Children's Safeguarding Partnership (TSCP)	The TSCP is comprised of the statutory Safeguarding Partners; Police, Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Authority, who work in close collaboration with other identified agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Torbay
Torbay Community Safety Partnership	Also known as Safer Communities. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) exist by law and their job is to bring agencies and people together to reduce crime and disorder and make areas safer.
Trauma Informed(Approach)	Where the signs and symptoms of trauma in people using services is recognised and understood. The service response takes into consideration the trauma that a person has experienced/ may have experienced in the past and how this may continue to affect them. TIA keeps an awareness of the effects of trauma at the forefront of the approach to providing support and seeks to avoid re-traumatization.
Victim Support (VS)	Charity supporting victims of crime in England Wales. In Devon and Cornwall, VS is the Strategic Delivery Partner of the Police and Crime Commissioner and is

	responsible for commissioning victim support services across the Peninsula including some domestic abuse and sexual violence services.
White Ribbon Ambassadors	Men (usually) who act as formal representatives of White Ribbon UK, part of a global movement to prevent men's violence against women and girls. They are positive role models taking a stand against all male violence against women and girls and encouraging other men and boys to do so too.
Whole Family Approach	Where the needs of all the individuals in the family are taken into consideration when carrying out support assessments and developing support plans. (In this context in relation to people using domestic abuse and sexual violence services and their children).

Data on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

National Data

Sources: Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) 2020; Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2020

- **74%** of victims of DVA crimes recorded by police In the year ending March 2020 were female
- In the year 2020 to 2021 unwanted sexual touching was **the most common type** of sexual assault experienced by both men and women
- Of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2020, the victim was female in **84%** of cases. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 3 in 100 women and 1 in 100 men (ONS 2020)
- In **57%** of all adult rape cases the victim feels unable to pursue the case
- **One-third** of all female SV victims were aged under 15 years old
- More than half (**55%**) of all male victims were aged under 15 years.
- Adults with a disability **are more likely** to have experienced DVA in the last 12 months than non-disabled people (CSEW 2020)
- People from black and minoritised ethnic communities suffer DVA for **1.5 times** longer than those with White British or Irish backgrounds (Safelives 2020)
- LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators - **15%** compared to **9%** of non-LGBT+ victims (Safelives 2018)
- Adults are **six times** as likely to experience rape or assault by a partner or ex-partner than a family member (ONS 2020)

“...constantly having to, like, justify everything because your abusers of the same sex, and it's really, really difficult. Because it's like 'oh a woman is capable of doing

that?.' It's like 'yes, they're very capable.' A man is capable, a woman is capable, it doesn't matter. If somebody wants to be abusive, they're going to be abusive"-

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

"we're not just talking about t-shirt sizes, it doesn't fit all, genders don't fit all, religion, doesn't fit all, you know, and trauma doesn't feel, it's all different and we all come out of it differently"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Torbay Domestic Abuse Headlines

- There were **2,005 police incidents** of domestic abuse in Torbay in 2020/21.
- Domestic abuse accounts for **22% of all crimes** in Torbay.
- **217** Marac referrals in 2020/21
- **72%** of victims reporting to the police over the past 3 years have been female (2018-21)
- **84%** of domestic abuse offenders were male in 2020/21
- **126** Domestic Violence Protection Orders were granted in 2020/21
- Almost a quarter (**24%**) of DVA related crimes are for stalking and harassment.
- **80%** of DVA incidents are assessed as being standard or medium risk.
- **113** Victims of domestic abuse presented as homeless in Torbay in 2020-21
- It is projected that **30%** (667) of referrals to Children's Services in 2020/21 had domestic abuse as a factor. **40%** of these came from the police.
- **164** children became looked after where domestic abuse was a factor over the three years 2018-2021
- Almost half (**47%**) progressed to a Child Protection Plan
- It is estimated that only **33%** of people experiencing DVA in Torbay are known to services

Torbay Sexual Violence Data Headlines

The data below is sourced from:

- First Light Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) service data 2021/22
 - Devon and Cornwall Police data provided to Torbay Council Community Safety Team
 - Devon Rape Crisis service data
 - Torbay Council online Are You OK survey 2021
-
- The police received **166** reports of rape in the year ending March 2022
 - There were **264** sexual offences reported to the police in 2021/22
 - **41.2%** of all ISVA referrals in 2021/22 were from Devon (including Torbay)
 - In **81%** of cases, the person causing the harm was known to the victim

- In **43.5%** of cases the person causing harm was a family member, relative, or partner/ex-partner
- In 2021/22 **31%** of referrals to Devon Rape Crisis were self-referrals, **36%** were from mental health providers
- **More than half** of females responding to the Are You OK survey who had experienced sexual abuse/violence, said they had been raped
- **More than half** of both males and females survey respondents who had experienced sexual abuse/violence reported they had experienced inappropriate touching.
- **97%** of those whose drinks had been spiked or thought they probably had been spiked were female
- **41%** of survey respondents did not recognise it as sexual abuse or violence at the time and **13%** were not sure.

Estimated of Proportion of Adults in Torbay who have experienced recent rape and/or sexual assault in the last 12 months, since the age of 16, or in childhood (based on self-reporting module of the CSEW¹ and MYE Population 2019):

	Males	Females
Since the age of 16	2,085	11,164
Last 12 months	406	1,542
In Childhood	1,655	5,613

“I thought it was you know, husband and wife or living partners. I didn't really think that domestic abuse applied to boyfriend and girlfriend”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

Developing our strategy

“So it was controlling, it's like walking on eggshells. You just, you know, something flared up, you kind of try and diffuse a situation as quickly as you can”

Domestic abuse survivor

¹ Local Authority Population Estimates MYE 2019 - <https://tinyurl.com/ybzvaomb>

"This needs some sophisticated, cutting edge thinking and not the usual. While "dealing with" episodes of sexual violence is essential, it will not change anything. Finding the way to change is at least an equal priority."

Respondent to public consultation on draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

In 2021 the Torbay Community Safety Partnership commissioned a strategic review of the system response to domestic violence in Torbay. The result was 241 pages of analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and identifiable areas for change across the system's responses. It produced 44 recommendations of how and where improvements could be made, with further recommendations from accompanying reports. This work also incorporated:

- a review of Torbay's Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC),
- the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (DAA21)
- a lived experience listening exercise
- analysis of the responses to the Council's online Are You OK? Survey conducted in late 2021.

The draft Strategy was published for public consultation during October and November 2022. Responses and suggestions have been incorporated into this final version.

The findings and recommendations from all of these activities have been collated to inform the direction and focus of this new Strategy and will be directly referenced in its Delivery Plan.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 (required by the DAA21) sits beneath this Strategy.

Torbay Council also participated in the Call to Action sexual violence project with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Innovation Unit. This included a mapping exercise of the support available to victims of sexual violence across wider Devon, and a listening exercise with people who have experienced sexual violence and abuse and practitioners working with them. The aim was to develop an understanding of what support victims and survivors want and need to help them recover and make sense of what has happened to them. The findings from this project have provided the strategic direction for sexual violence. In addition data about sexual violence services and demand has been gathered to inform a local position statement on sexual violence in Torbay.

There are some areas of DVA & SV activity which, out of necessity and pragmatism fit more appropriately with, for example, the children's safeguarding arena. This Strategy aims to consider DVA & SV in the context of a whole system response across the life course. There is a risk that the exclusion of some areas of work could lead to fragmentation and poor oversight of the overall strategic response. This risk will be addressed through the oversight and governance structures in place, ensuring connectivity and line of sight between the main DVA & SV strategy and related

strategies or workstreams. Changes to the strategic direction or areas of focus resulting from legislative or policy changes will be incorporated into reviews of the strategy.

Scope of the Strategy

The scope of this Strategy includes adult victims of domestic abuse and violence (i.e. those aged 16+) and adult victims of sexual violence (including historic child sexual abuse).

The DAA21 statutorily defines children and young people as victims in own right. For the purposes of this Strategy the scope includes children and young people who are victims of domestic violence and abuse and who are occupying safe accommodation with their parent/carer as part of the DAA21 duties, as well as the wider needs of children and families experiencing DVA. We know that we need to better understand the profile of children and families who experience domestic violence and abuse in order to improve and mature the system response.

..it takes a while to get into and realise 'oh I can have a phone. I can wear t-shirt in the sun. I can put makeup on'

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Out of scope

There are number of areas that are out of the scope of this Strategy because they require a specialist response and/or because the safeguarding of children is involved. By separating out these different issues, the protection of children is ensured and the complex and specialist nature of subjects like child sexual abuse and exploitation can be addressed in detail. Overlaps and alignment of activities will be identified during the development of the Strategy Delivery Plan.

Issues which sit alongside but which are out of the scope of this Strategy are:

- Child Sexual Abuse – this is within the remit of Torbay Safeguarding Children's Partnership (TSCP)³
- Child Sexual Exploitation – this is included in the TSCP Exploitation Strategy⁴
- Child against Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) – this is within the remit of Children's Services; except for those aged 16 and over which can be raised at MARAC where risk level indicates it is appropriate to do so
- Peer on Peer abuse – this is in the remit of Children's Services except where both parties are aged 16 and over and there is evidence of coercive control. These will be raised at MARAC where risk level indicates.

³ <http://torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/cyp/cse/>

⁴ <http://torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/cyp/cse/>

- Human Trafficking – this is within the remit of the Devon and Torbay Anti-Slavery Partnership⁵
- Prostitution – this within the remit of the Devon and Torbay Anti-Slavery Partnership⁶

What people have told us

“.... people need to be carried. Because you don't have the, just don't have the will to walk anymore. And for some of them, absolute horror, some of them don't have to will to live anymore”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“We need the voices of children, young people, communities and people with lived experience to inform us about what activity we should take”

Call to Action project participant

People don't always know that what they have experienced is domestic violence or sexual assault. This might be because they are not living together (so it's not “domestic”), it's not physical violence but coercion and control, or a rape took place within marriage. Some said that they did not feel what had happened was sufficiently serious to report to the police, many felt that they would not be believed.

Many described negative experiences of the system when they did report domestic violence or abuse to the Police, and Children's Services becoming involved having been alerted by the Police. Women spoke of feeling that they were being held accountable for the behaviour of the person causing the harm, because they had to take all the responsibility for protecting their children. Meanwhile the person who had harmed them was ignored or “invisible.” Many felt that professionals did not understand how domestic abuse affected their ability to take action, nor of how the Family Court system re-traumatises the victim survivor and their children and allows the person who caused the harm to continue to exercise control over them.

“.... I'd call the police. They said, 'don't open the door,' but that's okay when they tell you not to open the door, but what they do is, they report it to social services. And social services then say that you're not protecting your kids. But you tell me

⁵ <https://www.aspartnership.org.uk/devon-and-cornwall>

⁶ <http://www.torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/media/1483/tsa-business-plan-2021-2024.pdf>

how that works, if you phone the police and the police come and you've obviously phoned the police to get them removed and they removed them, how's that not you protecting your kids?"

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

"when you leave the abusive relationship that escalates the domestic violence more. But what people don't understand is it escalates even more four years, five years down the line. They get really, really bitter. And that's when they fight and they'll fight until they're blue in the face"

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

Those people who left their abusive relationships spoke of the difficulties finding somewhere to live and of navigating the rehousing process with the Council.

"the one thing that seems so hard at first was actually housing. It was literally one thing is you have nowhere to go. And first, obviously when I walked down that road, the first day, the hardest bit was walking and realising my children were still there. And so it was 'where am I gonna go?'"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

People feel guilt and shame about what has happened to them. This is reinforced by the prevailing myths and negative stereotyping surrounding rape and sexual assault, which hold the victim responsible for their attack because they were out late/drinking/of what they were wearing and so on. This is compounded by negative national media about the police – including sexual offences carried out by serving officers – the low conviction rate, the time it takes to progress to court (if the case does go to court), and the re-traumatisation of the court proceedings for what is often an unsuccessful outcome.

We heard that sexual violence is complex, often taking place in an intra-familial context, with patterns of behaviour repeating into the next generation. Victims and survivors of sexual violence suffer trauma long into adulthood – the stories we heard, information from Devon Rape Crisis, and the feedback in the Are You Ok survey show that many victims of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) don't disclose their experiences until many years after the event/s occurred. People are holding years of unresolved trauma that can present in a number of ways – through poor mental health, physical illness, or self-medication in the form of substance misuse for example. When a number of these factors co-exist, we see people who might be rough sleeping, some being coerced into prostitution by drug dealers in order to feed their habit; adding to their sense of shame and poor self-worth.

“some people are so traumatised, that it’s hard for them to reach out for help. It doesn’t mean that they don’t want help, it just means that person is a bit more fragile..... Spend time and I’ll open up with you and you’ll see that I’m not that person and I need more help than what I ever let onto”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Practitioners working in a range of support services – not specialist rape and sexual assault services and including the community and voluntary sector – spoke of the challenges in trying to help victims who disclose sexual violence during support. The fragmented funding and commissioning arrangements for sexual violence services mean that there is a “postcode lottery” of support with very limited support in Torbay itself, making it difficult for both victim survivors and practitioners to navigate. The services that exist tend to be in Exeter or Plymouth and have long waiting lists. This sometimes leaves practitioners who are not trained in working with victims of sexual violence and trauma, “holding” the person because there is no specialist support immediately available to them. This is risky for both the practitioner and the individual.

Examples have been provided that demonstrate the “silo” nature of working in the system, with sexual violence victims being referred to mental health services because of their trauma, only to be referred on to a sexual violence service – there is limited recognition of the long term impacts of trauma. As the Chief Executive of Devon Rape Crisis told us:

“people are being referred to [Devon Rape Crisis] if they have any history of sexual violence or abuse, regardless of whether this is causing the most difficulty for them or not.”

When support is obtained, it is often constrained by time or a restricted number of support sessions is available. Victims of sexual violence may not want a criminal justice response and just want to be listened to by someone who understands their experience. Some may want to follow the criminal justice process a period of time after the incident/s, others want to be able to access support at different points of the process but don’t have the choice.

“I think I would have found it easier if I was talking to somebody else who had been through it, rather than somebody who hadn’t.”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

There is limited availability of targeted support for victims and survivors of sexual violence in Torbay. Much of what is available is not directly funded or commissioned by statutory agencies and is instead reliant on non- recurrent short term grant arrangements, or in some cases “topped up” with grant funding. This means that the support provision is insecure and therefore unstable.

Finally, loud concerns were voiced around the role of pornography on social media and how this is impacting on the attitudes and behaviours of children and young people. The suggested solutions to this were several and wide ranging – and cannot be solved through the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum in isolation.

“Schools work is vital - with teachers, pastoral care and students”

Respondent to public consultation on draft Strategy

We did also hear stories that were positive and complimentary about the support people had received, including praise for individual workers, organisations, and agencies. Those that shared their stories with us wanted to make sure that their experiences were used to make things better for others.

Summary of our Findings

While some of the quotes below are from survivors of domestic abuse, the underpinning narrative of lack of belief, victim stereotyping and re-traumatisation are equally as applicable to people who have experienced sexual violence:

“....they just need to believe the person that’s sat in front of them. That’s all anybody needed to do for me, and nobody did it. Nobody believed me”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“You hear this criticism all the time about ‘Oh, why did she go back to him?’ It’s very obvious why women go back, because they’re convinced that it’s their fault, that they deserve to be mistreated and it’s so bloody difficult to get away. It’s so hard”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

"I was a person that was middle age by that stage. I did have a disability and I was challenged because people often discriminated against me because of my race."

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“Feels like the system is organised to support perpetrators not victims.”

Call to Action project participant

"The onus is on you to get out and escape, it kind of enables the abuser, doesn't it?"

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

"The whole court scenario is just horrendous. Family court is just the worst experience anyone could ever go through ever. So you go through all this horrible abuse, you try to come the other side and then you have to face family courts, where they tear you and your children apart in front of you..."

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Many consistent messages have been heard from the feedback that people have given us. These can be summarised as follows:

- Victims don't report because they think they won't be believed
- Victims are not always sure that what they have experienced is DVA/SV
- Victims are fearful of repercussions if they report, especially they fear statutory interventions (e.g. having their children removed) because the police inform Children's Services when they receive a report
- Victims who do report have negative experiences
- The impact on children and young people as victims is not being addressed
- The system focuses on the victim rather than placing accountability on the person who harmed them
- Victims find it difficult to find a safe place to live if they choose to leave
- System responses are not trauma informed - instead they re-traumatise
- Risk management by the MARAC could be more effective
- Culture of victim blaming and myths evident within parts of the system
- Limited or no understanding of the needs of victims from minoritised communities, or those with multiple and intersectional needs
- Lack of consistent and coordinated data recording – the strategic response is not always evidence based
- Response to sexual violence is limited and immature despite having a high public profile
- Voice of victims is unheard in strategic response
- People feel shame, guilt, blame and anger
- Victims and survivors of sexual violence feel let down by those supposed to help them and that their experiences are minimised or not believed
- People want choice around when and how they access support.

What needs to change

“...I wasn't listened to, I was belittled. Can you imagine being stood in a dock with no, you've got no legal representation. Yet you've been told by judges and told by social services that the domestic violence isn't an issue now, because you're not in it. Now, my child is now suffering. He has a tracker on his phone when he's with me. So I'm being trapped when my son's with me. There's nothing I can do. I can't afford to go to court and if I could go back in time, I'd stay with him, I wouldn't have left him. I wouldn't. Because there's no ongoing support”

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

“Our society doesn't want to talk about sex so to talk about sexual abuse and intrafamilial harm is an underlying issue to address - we all need to feel confident to do this.”

Call to Action project

Based on all of the information collected, the following areas for change have been identified:

- We must listen to the voices of those with Lived Experience if we want to design services and responses that will effectively address DASV
- Understanding and addressing Sexual Violence must be brought to the forefront as it is the poor relation to DVA
- We need more focus on the impacts on children and young people as victims
- We must manage risk more effectively BUT
- We must stop holding the victim responsible for the behaviour of the person harming/who has harmed them
- We must believe victims and validate them to build trust and safety
- The system must stop re-traumatising victims
- We must address the fear of reporting - otherwise we will not address the causal link between high levels of DVA and the fear of statutory interventions
- We must better understand the needs of minoritised groups and those with intersectional needs so we can respond to them
- We need to understand the different drivers and typologies of DA & SV
- Professionals and practitioners must understand the dynamics of power and control - and the power they hold as actors within the system
- We must accept discomfort in order to challenge cultural norms and attitudes in the system

- We must accept that not all victims and survivors want a criminal justice response
- We must collect consistent, meaningful data and use it to inform and develop the system response.

Our Strategy

".. So, if you had somewhere where, you know, people that have been victims in the past could help people that were victims now, then that would be amazing because I don't think anybody else would believe it."

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

"Dig deeper into the cultural imbalance of services and how to equalise it."

Respondent to public consultation on draft Strategy

We have built a strong base of evidence of the need to strengthen the strategic response to domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Torbay that will inform our work over the life course of this Strategy.

We want to:

Work in partnership with individuals, communities, and organisations to break the chain of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay, to enable our residents to live safely and to thrive.

To achieve this:

- Support for victims and survivors and their families must be **trauma-informed**
- We must **prevent harm** in the first place whilst **disrupting harmful behaviour**
- We must **hold those who harm accountable** for their actions
- We must ensure that know they are **believed**
- We **address** victims and survivors **fears about system generated reprisals**
- We **recognise that sexual violence is the poor relation** to domestic abuse in terms of the strategic response and take bold steps to **address the imbalance**
- We must ensure we **support children and young people** as victims in their own right

Our Principles

We will work to the following principles and will proactively encourage and challenge others to do so:

1. Connect different parts of the system together to create a coordinated community response to domestic abuse and sexual violence
2. Hear and learn from people with lived experience
3. Be trauma informed and shame sensitive
4. Make the best use of existing resources and assets
5. Elevate, develop, and improve our responses to sexual violence.

When working with families, including those who are causing harm, a whole family approach will be taken to address the needs of each individual in the household.

What We Want to Achieve

From what people have told us, and the areas that have been highlighted for change, we have identified the outcomes that we want to achieve over the short, medium, and long term:

Short term outcomes

- People understand that domestic abuse is not just physical and can occur in any intimate relationships
- People understand consent, and that rape and sexual assault can occur in intimate relationships.
- Victims and survivors know that they will be believed
- Victims and survivors know how and where to get advice on their options in a range of ways, that responds to what they say they need at the time
- The response to domestic and sexual violence and abuse is designed with victims and survivors, and informed by their lived experiences and needs

Medium term outcomes

- Victims and survivors receive peer support and advice before, during and after their experiences to help them recover
- People who harm others by using domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse are identified and disrupted
- Professionals understand the impacts of DVA/SVA and trauma on victims and survivors and/or their families and the coping mechanisms they use to keep themselves and their children safe

- Professionals and statutory agencies understand the range of ways that people who harm use and continue to use coercive control and harassment to continue to abuse long after relationship has ended
- Professionals understand that coping mechanisms may be maladaptive and that someone choosing to remain in an abusive relationship does not mean they are complicit in the abuse

Long term outcomes

- A greater range of local support is available for victims and survivors of sexual violence
- A coordinated system response is in place that breaks the cycle of abuse
- Support and interventions are provided via a mixed market of statutory and voluntary sector organisations
- Services and interventions are informed by a developing evidence base supported by robust data and monitoring of trends; including understanding why people who harm do and the typologies of harmful behaviour.
- The strategic system response to sexual violence is prioritised and continually evaluated to achieve parity with the DVA response

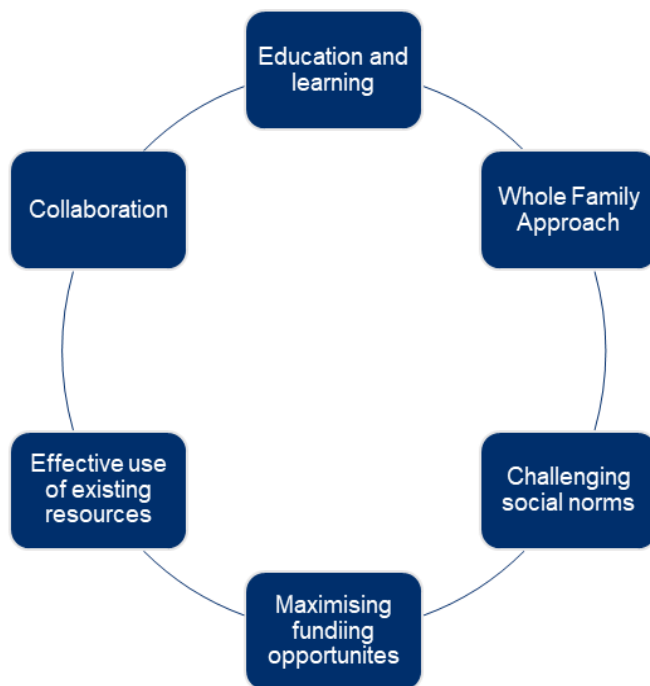
Delivering the outcomes

“Be compassionate and hold people safely when they disclose”

Call to Action Project participant

Our outcomes are ambitious and challenging, particularly in view of the resource and capacity pressures that exist in our systems in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. However the impact of Covid-19 and other external factors that are influencing our economy will also be affecting people living with, and those who carry out, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Investment in services alone will not address the fundamental issues that lie behind sexual violence and domestic abuse. Changing the way people think will, however this change in culture and beliefs will be slow and difficult. Central to our approach will be the following:



These fundamentals will flow through the five key activities that we will undertake to meet the outcomes we want to achieve:

1. Embed lived experience and co-production
2. Prevent victimisation and harmful behaviours
3. Identify victimisation and harmful behaviours
4. Disrupt harmful behaviour
5. Develop data and understanding

These key activities will form the basis of a Strategy Delivery Plan, which will be co-produced with multi-agency partners, services, and people with lived experience. Beneath each activity there will be a range of actions and workstreams designed to deliver the outcomes over the life course of the Strategy.

Activity 1- Embed lived experience and co-production



We will:

- Develop mechanisms to hear and learn from people with experience of DA&SV, including children and young people
- Ensure contributions are recognised, valued, and appropriately reimbursed
- Utilise and build upon existing community assets

Activity 2 - Prevent victimisation and harmful behaviours

We will:



- Grow the Healthy Relationships Education offer in schools
- Implement the findings from the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Project
- Frame awareness raising and communications in the context of relationships
- Develop and deliver the Bystander training offer across Torbay
- Increase the pool of DA Champions and White Ribbon Ambassadors
- Implement relational approaches across the system
- Challenge cultural norms and attitudes in respect of victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse

Activity 3 – Identify victimisation and harmful behaviours

We will:



- Exercise belief and let victims know they will be and are believed
- Identify early people who harm others and work with them to address their behaviour
- Develop a skilled workforce that are confident in handling disclosures of DVA &/or SV and know what to do next (competency framework)
- Ensure that people working with victims and survivors of DVA & SV have an understanding of trauma (including the judiciary)
- Ensure that children and young people are recognised as victims and receive specialist support
- Ensure that services are inclusive and understand how DVA &SV may present differently amongst minority communities
- Establish simple pathways that easily connect services
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements

Activity 4 - Disrupt harmful behaviour

We will:



- Implement the MARAC review recommendations
- Establish pathways to support for those who harm others
- Ensure effective safety planning with focus on the person causing the harm
- Ensure a co-ordinated approach to disrupt the person causing harm whilst supporting the victim survivor and any children as part of a Whole Family Approach

- Focus on the person who harms, not the victim
- Develop peer support and recovery options in the community for victims and survivors including children and young people

Activity 5 - Develop data and understanding



We will:

- Develop wider understanding of the different types of behaviour and motivations of those who harm to improve our system response to them and better protect victims and survivors
- Establish consistent data collection and monitoring including for protected characteristics and people with intersectional needs
- Establish a baseline dataset and evaluation to check how we are doing
- Consider a systems/case management system to improve reporting
- Develop a quality assurance approach to ensure the system response meets the needs and aspirations of all victims and survivors

Monitoring and Oversight

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) will be responsible for strategic oversight of this Strategy and delivery of the action plans. This group also acts as the statutory Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board for the purposes of the Domestic Abuse 2021 Part 4 and the delivery of the associated Safe Accommodation Strategy.

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Operational Group (DASVOG) will be responsible for undertaking the work required in the Delivery Plan. This includes connecting with other agencies and practitioners and involving them in specific workstreams.

DASVEG reports into Torbay Community Safety Partnership, Torbay Children's Safeguarding Partnership, and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Review

The Delivery Plan will be kept under review to ensure that we are achieving our outcomes. As part of that review, consideration will be given to whether this Strategy remains fit for purpose. This will include consideration of the impact of any significant change in legislation or policy.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.
For more information, please contact safercommunities@torbay.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report to Cabinet to be considered as part of the public consultation.

Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 9 November 2022 to consider the consultation draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Commissioning and Strategy Lead, Shirley Beauchamp, outlined the submitted Strategy (Policy Framework document) and responded to questions on the following:
 - the need for a cultural change and education from an early age as well as adults so that people can recognise what was good and not good in a relationship;
 - what work was being done to listen to the voice of the perpetrator to understand why they have behaved in a certain way, it may have been that they were victims of abuse themselves or have other problems and may need to be supported themselves;
 - how close the Domestic Abuse Team worked with the Drugs and Alcohol Team to see if they can recognise victims when working with their clients;
 - the need to ensure support for people who have suffered from historic sexual abuse;
 - the importance of a supportive approach so that victims know that people will believe them and support them;
 - the use of acronyms within the Strategy and the importance of a glossary of terms to help people to understand them; and
 - how do we challenge our partners, social landlords and others so that they can learn to spot signs and refer or report the issue to the appropriate agency.

The Board acknowledged that training was provided to Council staff and Councillors on safeguarding, by stander and domestic abuse but felt that more could be done to challenge our partners and our communities to encourage everyone to report any areas of concern.

2. The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both in writing and orally and formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.

3. That the Cabinet be recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board supports the draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, subject to the inclusion of a glossary of terms.

Record of Decisions

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 23 February 2023.

Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

That the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

Reason for the Decision

The previous Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy was due to end in early 2023.

Implementation

The recommendations of the Cabinet will be considered at the Council meeting on 7 March 2023.

Information

The current Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (Policy Framework document) ends in March 2023. In preparation a strategic review of the domestic abuse response in Torbay was undertaken in 2021. The review incorporated a review of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and a lived experience listening exercise. All the recommendations and findings have informed the direction and focus of the new Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy.

At the meeting Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Stockman seconded a motion which was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

An alternative option would be to do nothing. However, this was discounted as the current policy was set to expire this year and would not take account of the information gathered from the review and the high profile nature of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay.

A further option would have been to have two individual strategies for domestic violence and abuse, and sexual violence this was discounted by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) as this would fragment the strategic response, create areas of overlap and duplication and ineffective use of resources.

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

28 February 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet